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VIZIRS:

OR,

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AN ORIENTAL TALE.

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Page 69. THE lowry is a kind of parrot.

Page 72. Mazenderan is a part of the kingdom called by the ancients *Hyrcania* and *Margiana.*

Page 73. Multan is a part of the province of *Sind*, in which is the city of *Surat.*

Page 90. The Persian authors pretend that as *Zohac* was one day sitting on his

his uſurped throne, two monſtrous ſerpents ruſhed upon him, and intwined themſelves to his arms, devouring his ſhoulder, when they were not fed with young children, who, for that horrible purpoſe, were torn from their diſconſolate parents; and that, at laſt, the uſurper was devoured by the voracious reptiles.

Page 93. The Zend, which ſignifies *the book of life*, is a compound of abſurd doctrine, and of morality, which chiefly conſiſt in the recommendation of ſuperſtitious practices. The Veſta, or Aveſta, which was joined to it, is a commentary on the ſaid doctrine, of the two principles under the allegory of light and darkneſs.

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ZERIR could not hear that Saheb had refuſed to obey his orders, and was advancing towards Kharezm, without a reſentment ſuitable to his fiery temper, to which his new favourite Melec adminiſtered the fuel of ſkilful envy. But, as, the conflict of various paſſions frequently turns out to the profit of reaſon, love, having prevailed over anger and pride;

prepared the way for reflections of a calmer nature.

The enamoured prince, conſidering that Saheb was the father of Zulica, and the arbiter of his happineſs, at laſt took from the reluctant hand of Melec, a letter in which the Vizir excuſed his diſobedience, with the moſt moving expreſſions of zeal and friendſhip.

Although a generous heart, miſled by paſſions, may revolt at being thwarted in its deſires; it cannot help receiving the unpleaſing remonſtrances with gratitude, when it knows that a ſincere affection dictates

dictates them. This Zerir experienced; and going farther in the confidence with which the attachment of the Vizir inſpired him, he ceaſed to doubt of his future compliance, and reproached himſelf with inconſideration, for not having acquainted him with his motive for refuſing the princeſs of Zableſtan.

When, thus, hope had once more got poſſeſſion of his heart, his thoughts were compoſed. He ſaw that to renew his command of conducting back Periſadeh, when ſhe might have already entered the kingdom of Kharezm, would be exaſperating the Vizir, and putting new obſtacles and delays to the deciſion of his

own fate. But as he ſtill judged that the neceſſity of avoiding the preſence of the unfortunate princeſs was indiſpenſable; he ordered that ſhe ſhould be received with honour, and reſpectfully detained in a caſtle ſituated on her road to Zamakſhar.

Nothing can expreſs the conſternation of Melec, when being intruſted with the whole ſecret of Zerir, he ſaw the imprudence of his own conduct with Saheb. As his narrow and debaſed mind could not conceive the exiſtence of a generous one, he doubted not that the Vizir would prefer the elevation of his daughter to any conſideration whatſoever; and with this

this thought, ſeeing himſelf on the precipice of ruin, he retired, in order to contrive ſome method of eſcaping what he fancied to be an impending danger.

The ſchemes of wicked men are always framed by deceit, and attended with new evils; Melec, having found means to convey falſhood into the ear of Saphira and Gulrouz, perſuaded them that Zerir intended to get Zulica into his poſſeſſion before the arrival of Saheb, in order to force him to give a conſent, which he had ſternly refuſed. As his envious heart had nothing to diſpute with women, he allowed them, at leaſt, a timorous virtue; and conſe-

quently flattered himſelf that the two amiable friends would take ſome meaſures ſuitable to his views. He was not deceived in the good opinion he had of them, but the ſucceſs he had founded upon it, anſwered not his expectation.

The alarmed Saphira, in order to ſave her daughter from the attempt with which ſhe was threatened, prudently reſolved to ſend her to Turan, under the conduct of Gulrouz and Elich. This deſign was kept a profound ſecret, but as prying malice knows how to reach the inmoſt receſs of caution; and like eager covetouſneſs, ſeeks not to explore the concealed mine, but for the purpoſe of turning to

a bad uſe its precious contents; Ruſka who had been diſcarded from the ſervice of Saphira, diſcovered the motive of the preparations made in the palace of Saheb; and burning with revenge, haſtened to Zerir, whoſe protection ſhe claimed in behalf of her pupil.

At this intelligence, the paſſionate monarch was tranſported with an inexpreſſible fury; which, however, the artful ſlave found means to reſtrain, by repreſenting to him how much better it would ſuit his love and dignity to reſcue Zulica from the tyranny of Gulrouz, than to force her from the natural protection of a mother.

In conſequence of this reſolution, many emiſſaries were ſet on the watch, and, at their ſignal, Zerir himſelf received the willing damſel into his arms. As the obſcurity of the night favoured him, and concealed his unbecoming raptures, he entered his palace with his precious burthen, to the utter confuſion of Melec.

Whilſt the diſappointed courtier reproached himſelf for having thus forwarded an union, which he dreaded as the greateſt misfortune; whilſt he ſorrowfully ſat at the door, which excluded him from the field, where deluded innocence held an unequal combat againſt paſſionate love; he ſaw the Vizir advancing

vancing with the haſty ſtep of impatient anxiety; and for once, being led by a bad intention into the path of a good action, he acquainted Saheb with the danger of his daughter.

As a pilot, who has almoſt exhauſted his ſkill and courage in avoiding the rocks and quickſands of a dangerous ſea, gives himſelf up for irrecoverably loſt, when he finds his ſhip running into the dreadful jaw of an unknown whirlpool: thus, the Vizir, whoſe firmneſs had been ſufficiently exerted by the former exceſſes of Zerir; and who was depreſſed at his laſt outrage againſt Periſadeh; could not

receive the unexpected blow, which seemed to crush for ever his honour and remaining hopes, without being struck with a deadly terror;

In vain Melec, who thought his apparent lethargy a very unseasonable accident, endeavoured to rouse him from it; the voice of a bad man may convey death, but can never infuse life into a virtuous heart: Happily a more suitable succour was at hand; for Gulrouz, whom Zerir had disdained to secure, as he had done Elich, appeared in that fatal instant, and with her the desolate Saphira; both wandering in the wilderness of despair.

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The inanimated Vizir, preſſed in the fond embraces of his beloved conſort, bathed by her tender tears, encouraged by the ſpirited entreaties of Gulrouz, ſoon recovered the uſe of his ſenſes; and having forbidden the two friends to follow him, entered the palace with his natural fortitude.

The guards, who reverenced him, obſtructed not his paſſage towards the inner apartments; at his command every door was opened; and Zerir, awed by the majeſty, and indignation which were blended on his brow, remained ſpeechleſs and overcome with confuſion. It was not ſo with Zulica, who in a

tranſport of joy, running to embrace his knees, exclaimed;

"O happy, moſt happy moment, which preſents my father to my eyes before the torrent of perſuaſive love has overwhelmed my heart in its ſweets. Yes, deareſt author of my life, this generous and amiable prince, panting after his happineſs and mine, had almoſt prevailed with me to accept the precious gift of his faith, and to receive him in my arms without your conſent. Oh! I ſhould have been undutiful towards you, if he could have ſeen how much my heart diſagreed with the refuſal, that my trembling lips pronounced; I ſhould now be deprived

prived of the ſatisfaction to ſee you approve and bleſs an union ſo glorious for me!"

The ingenuouſneſs of Zulica, ſupported by the innocence of her looks and ſmiles, having relieved the ſinking ſoul of Saheb, he raiſed her to his paternal embraces, and with the gentle voice of affection, ſaid;

"Haſte, my child, to bring to thy mother the conſolation which thou haſt conveyed to my heart; ſhe waits for thee at the gate of the palace; truſt your real happineſs to her care and mine."

At

At theſe words, the artleſs maid, turning her expreſſive eyes towards Zerir, and kiſſing tenderly the hand of her father, departed with the alacrity of elated hope.

The perplexed ſilence which enſued this moving ſcene, was at laſt broken by Saheb, who thus addreſſed Zerir;

"As I am willing to ſpare your repenting bluſhes, I ſhall not aſk you, my lord, the reaſons of what I have ſeen and heard; and ſince, by the favour of Heaven, my daughter is reſcued from the double ſnares of your ſeduction and her inexperience; I appeal to your

own heart for the reparation you owe me after ſuch unworthy treatment, and ſo undeſerved an affront?"

"Oh! pronounce thyſelf my friend, cried Zerir; I will not plead with thee the purity of my intentions; forgive me generouſly, if thou art offended; and command the utmoſt of my power."

"Follow me then inſtantly to the caſtle in which your raſh orders detain Periſadeh, replied Saheb; repent of your baſe deſign againſt her, and I ſhall forget my own wrongs. I will be ſtill your ſincere friend and your faithful ſubject if you are juſt to a princeſs, whoſe

beauty

beauty eclipſes all the beauties of our ſublunary globe, as the bright Zohara* eclipſes the numerous choir of ſtars in the azure firmament. As to my daughter---"

"Hold thy cruel tongue, interrupted Zerir; let not the ſharp arrows of thy words pierce a heart which has nothing to reproach itſelf with on thy account; and will not thus weakly yield to thy unnatural prepoſſeſſion. Though the moſt injurious attempt againſt my authority had put Zulica in my hands, know that before this accident, which makes my love a duty, I had reſolved to raiſe her to my throne. Is this ſuch an henious

* The ſtar of Venus.

henious offence? Shall I disgrace thee in calling thee my father?"

"Yes, prince, returned Saheb; that name which would have been my pride in any other circumstances, would now brand me with infamy. Do not frown at my necessary freedom; this is not the moment of flattering the vain idol of grandeur. When I complied with your desires, and even since the first light of my reason, I raised my eyes to the glorious seat of virtue, before which all the thrones of the world are leveled to the ground. It is there that my daughter would be truly exalted; thither I must conduct her, instead of losing the hallowed

lowed path myſelf by a double crime. I have plighted your faith to a princeſs moſt deſerving your love and reſpect; and whom you cannot offend with impunity: but if I had betrothed in your name the meaneſt of women; if no danger ſhould attend your perjury, I would not be the accomplice of it. I have promiſed Zulica to Elich; and if the empire of the world were her portion, I would keep my word with the unprotected ſon of my friend."

Zerir, who had endeavoured to reſtrain his impatience during the noble ſpeech of his Vizir; could contain himſelf

ſelf no longer at the name of Elich; and with a furious look, ſaid;

"Beware, audacious man, beware of abuſing the gratitude I owe to your paſt ſervices; the obligation will be cancelled from the moment you let me perceive, that, inſtead of reſtoring me the ſplendor of a crown, you have deſtined me to the ignominy of a baſe chain. Retire; and reflect better on your duties; the moſt ſacred for you is to promote the happineſs of your daughter and of your king; I ſhould ſay of your friend, if the obſcure Elich had not robbed a monarch of that title. Preſent me the hand of Zulica in three days; or, if you perſiſt in the reſolution of keeping your

your promiſe, prepare yourſelf to wed your daughter to the lifeleſs corſe of my unworthy rival."

In ſaying this, he turned from Saheb, who quitted the palace with a grief known only by generous and excellent hearts, when, being oppreſſed by bold ingratitude, they diſdain to relieve themſelves by uſing the ſting of reproach. As, however, the enlightened and ſteady mind of Saheb could not admit that levity of opinions and ſentiments ſo common among the generality of men, and be toſſed by every event, as a veſſel without a rudder by contrary winds; he changed not the firſt judgment he had formed

formed on the character of Zerir. He ſtill ſaw in the heart of that prince the ſeeds of every virtue, but ſo overgrown with the weeds of paſſion, as to require the moſt ſkilful hand in order to pluck away the noiſome plants. This thought having brought him back to what had juſt paſſed, he arraigned his own conduct for not having ſoftened the voice of reproach and remonſtrance, without conſidering that the moſt difficult taſk, which a righteous miniſter has to perform with his ſovereign, is that of ſweetening the natural bitterneſs of truth. He then reſolved to try the power of perſuaſion, before he returned with theſe cruel tidings to the princeſs of Zableſtan; and was confirmed

in

in that deſign, by hearing that Elich was actually in the priſon of Zerir, who could execute his dreadful threats in the firſt tranſports of raging paſſions.

If the good intentions of the Vizir had only had the violent temper of Zerir to encounter, perhaps they would have gained their ends; but unhappily they alſo had to contend with artful malice, which knows too well how to time and enforce bad advice.

There is no ſituation in which a man wants ſo much the ſupport of a confidant as when he ſtruggles againſt reaſon, truth, and juſtice: righteouſneſs enables the

the mind to contain the burthen of its thoughts even in the hard preſſures of grief; guilt weakens the heart with perplexities, forces it to recoil, as it were, upon itſelf, and at laſt to ſeek a foreign help in order to recruit its ſtrength. Thus, Zerir had no ſooner commanded his true friend to retire from his preſence, than he ſent for the falſe one, whom his imprudence had ſo raſhly choſen.

Melec received the expected injunction with raptures; for he had, from his poſt at the palace gate, obſerved all that had paſſed under his prying eyes; and drawn the moſt favourable omen for himſelf

ſelf from the troubled countenance of Saheb.

Although ſo well prepared, he was ſtruck with aſtoniſhment and a forced reverence at the virtue of Saheb; but ſoon recovering from that firſt emotion, he aſcribed the generous reſolution of the Vizir to an inſolent pride, and inſupportable obſtinacy, and ſo effectually expatiated on the dangerous crime of a ſubject who preſumptuouſly oppoſeth the deſires of his ſovereign, that having entirely troubled the reaſon of Zerir, he extorted from him an order to ſurround the manſion of Saheb with guards at his choice, and to declare to the Vizir that neither himſelf

himſelf nor any of his family would be permitted to ſtir from his encircled walls till Zulica ſhould be reſtored to the arms of her royal lover.

Melec having thus inſured the foundation of his evil deſign from being deſtroyed by the powerful hand of virtue, thought it neceſſary to confirm Saheb in his generoſity, the eloquence of which he no more feared; he even depended upon it for the ſucceſs of his views.

With a well-diſſembled reluctance he expoſed to the unfortunate Vizir the command with which he was intruſted; intimating, at the ſame time, his intention

of doing to a juſt cauſe all the good offices conſiſtent with his own ſafety; as to contrive ſome means for reſcuing Elich, and giving to an oppreſſed family the opportunity of quitting the kingdom of Kharezm.

Although theſe arts were needleſs; although the heroic ſoul of Saheb wanted not the anchor of hope in order to ſtand firm in the ſea of troubles; the offers of Melec were thankfully received; for, the crafty courtier had gained much in a heart naturally inclined to judge every one favourably, by the zeal he had ſhewn for ſaving the honour of Zulica.

Among

Among the dark windings that the indefatigable Melec was obliged to purſue in his way to the falſe glittering abode of ambition, to diſpoſe of Periſadeh was not the leaſt embarraſſing ſtep he had to take. He dreaded that princeſs as much as Saheb, whoſe intereſt he doubted not ſhe would eſpouſe, if ever her beauty ſhould reaſſume its right on the heart of Zerir. With this fear, he carefully avoided to pronounce her name before the infatuated prince; and, keeping his love for Zulica in a perpetual phrenzy, he truſted to time for being extricated from this labyrinth of difficulties.

Whilſt he thought to have thus rendered himſelf maſter of future events, the gentle and mournful ſighs of Periſadeh, being waſted to Heaven by the guardian genius of defenceleſs innocence, drew down the ſcourge of puniſhment upon his head and that of Zerir, according to their reſpective demerits, and procured for herſelf the conſolation of generous friendſhip.

As fame and cenſure redouble their natural ſwiftneſs and loquacity when they have to divulge the failings of great men, their voices reached the retreat in which the princeſs of Dilem had doomed herſelf to be buried in oblivion, and diſturbed

turbed her peace by their loud accuſation againſt Zerir.

The amiable Sitara, was too tenderly intereſted in the fate of that imprudent monarch, to ſupport without terror the thought of his impending misfortune; but her excellent heart was yet more affected with his injuſtice againſt Periſadeh. She compared her own ſituation with that of a rival whoſe happineſs ſhe had often envied, and found it infinitely more ſupportable. She had been torn away from a father by an abandoned and odious man, but that father had never ſhewn her a paternal tenderneſs: and Periſadeh had voluntarily quitted a fond and worthy pa-

rent in hopes of being united to a great and beloved prince, whom ſhe had found baſe and faithleſs. Her ardent paſſion for Zerir had met with the impenetrable ice of indifference; but the pangs of unrequited love are not ſo grievous as the deep wound which inconſtancy gives to a ſenſible heart.

Theſe conſiderations, which would have comforted a ſoul leſs generous than that of Sitara, were a new load of affliction to her. At laſt, ſhe took the heroic reſolution to ſacrifice the quiet of her life in order to adminiſter the balm of conſolation to Periſadeh, and to reſcue Zerir,

rir, if poſſible, from the evils which encompaſſed him.

The princeſs of Zableſtan, to whom the perfidious Melec had juſt then conveyed the cruel intelligence of Zerir's infidelity, with all the aggravations that could bend the tender plant of her life under the ſcythe of death, received the lovely Sitara as a meſſenger ſent from Heaven in order to ſtem the current of overwhelming diſpondence. Her fortitude had been almoſt cruſhed beneath the heavy ſhock; though ſhe had in part foreſeen it, by finding herſelf a captive where ſhe expected to reign: but ſurmiſes in love never alleviate the blow of

certainty. To this was added the unexpected desertion of Saheb, which could not but fill a heart like that of Perisadeh with a virtuous indignation.

Sitara relieved her from this last painful thought, by apprising her of the generosity of the Vizir, and the reward he had received for it by the artifices of Melec: for, the transactions of kings are exposed to so many watchful eyes, that they never long remain under the veil of secresy.

With a noble sincerity, the princess of Dilem recounted her unhappy history to Perisadeh; not even concealing her sentiments

timents for Zerir; and crowned the generoſity of this confidence, by declaring that her intention was to ſet out immediately for Zamakſhar, in order to pierce with the light of truth and reaſon the darkneſs with which the malice of Melec ſurrounded a prince naturally juſt and good, though too impetuous in his paſſions.

Periſadeh had ſelf-proved a ſucceſſion of various ſentiments during the narration of Sitara. She had ſhuddered at the dreadful fate, and lamented the mournful condition of a princeſs whoſe beauty, merit, and wiſdom ſo well deſerved love, reſpect, and admiration. Her grief had

been awhile, ſuſpended by the praiſe beſtowed upon Zerir, and the account of his ardent paſſion for her; but when the princeſs of Dilem, endeavouring to encourage the hopes ſhe thought to have raiſed in her breaſt, ſpoke of her departure, ſhe enfolded her in her arms, and with a new flood of tears, exclaimed;

"O thou whoſe ſentiments are ſo much above the frailty of mortals that I ſtill could doubt if thou art not a celeſtial intelligence! do not thus leave me bewildered in deſpair! Let not thy excellent heart deceive itſelf by a deluding proſpect which flatters its unparalleled goodneſs! My unſhaken affection for Zerir

admits

admits not the leaſt doubt of the truth of what thou haſt ſaid in his praiſe; but in going even farther than thyſelf in my exalted eſteem for him, I loſe the ſhadow of hope which thou vainly embraceſt. Know, in ſhort, that I cannot help accuſing ſome malevolent Dive* of my misfortune; for ſurely a mind in which my fancied image had reſiſted the power of thy charms and virtues, muſt have been forced to inconſtancy by a ſupernatural doom. Ceaſe then to aim at an impoſſibility: teach me thy noble reſignation, thy ſweet patience. Support my weakened reaſon; and thy delicate ears never ſhall be wounded by the harſh ſound of reſent-

* The Dives were thought a race of evil genii.

ment againſt thine and my beloved; never will I call the wrath of God or men upon a prince to whom I have given my heart and pledged my faith. Yes, I ſhall remain, without murmur, within the walls of this caſtle, which is no more a priſon for me than the vaſt univerſe would be, whilſt I am thus caſt off from him, in whoſe dear preſence I expected to dwell for ever. Let my grave be dug on the ſoil of yonder turfs, which is already moiſtened by my anxious and ſolitary tears. With the words of peace, convey my ſoul from its unhappy abode to the region of eternal joy; and there I will claim in thy behalf the reward due to innocence and piety."

Sitara,

Sitara, not willing to oppoſe the ſtorm of a juſt grief, bowed the brow of ſubmiſſion before the almighty throne, from whence affliction and relief deſcend upon earth; ſtill fluttering herſelf that ſhe might be choſen to adminiſter comfort to her new friend.

No friendſhip is ſo lively, ſo tender, and ſo laſting as that which a ſympathy of virtues produces: envy and jealouſy cannot ſubſiſt with that ſacred tie, for it prevents the contention for merit or beauty, and even the ſuſpicions which a rivalry in love too often inſpires.

The

The two princeſſes having thus united their elevated ſouls, had for each other that intire confidence, the ripening of which is, in general, the work of time; that effuſion of heart ſo delightful in a happy ſituation, and ſo relieving in a diſtreſſed one. But although this ſweet interchange of thoughts ſometimes ſtopped the torrent of grief, which overwhelmed the heart of Periſadeh, it could not but renew its courſe with a redoubled fury as long as it was not drained in its ſource; thus, the wounded doe may receive ſome relief from the application of ſalutary herbs, but never can be cured till the arrow of the cruel hunter is drawn from

from her bleeding breaſt by the powerful dittany.

Sitara, too well convinced of that truth, by ſeeing the choiceſt flower that bloomed in the garden of beauty dry away upon its elegant ſtalk, uſed the arms of entreaties in the field of tenderneſs, in order to overcome the reſolution of Periſadeh againſt her deſign of trying the ſhafts of perſuaſion upon the obdurate ſoul of Zerir; but the too ſenſible and too unfortunate princeſs ſhuddered at the idea of an experiment, which, in expoſing the prepoſſeſſed monarch to painful ſtruggles, would probably turn to her own confuſion.

The

The opinion with which weak and guilty minds are prejudiced in regard to the power aſcribed to inviſible and malevolent beings, was too impious to biaſs long the ſolid judgment of Periſadeh and to be graſped at by her pure heart; ſhe diſclaimed it as an error of her wandering reaſon and a delirium of love; but, in confeſſing that the ſupreme juſtice cannot permit crimes to be forced upon thoſe who are to account for them before its awful tribunal; ſhe ſtill found many reaſons for excuſing and pitying Zerir, and many more for not parting with her only and deareſt friend, till Sitara, having pathetically expatiated on the undeſerved perſecution which the excellent Vizir ſuſ-

tained

tained on her account, won her compliance with the weapon of generosity.

While friendship was displaying the pinions of zeal to cleave the thick atmosphere of deluding flattery and treacherous counsels, unwary malice was entangled in its own web. A long series of days had elapsed since the short time which Zerir had fixed for the decisive answer of Saheb; and though his passion for Zulica had been kept in the height of its fermentation by the arts of Melec, this ambitious courtier, more enterprising than sagacious, had not brought the matters to a crisis, the nature of which he even knew not how to wish for.

It was in his power to facilitate the flight of Saheb, but no diſtances are a ſhelter for cowardly fear; as to the entire deſtruction of the Vizir, which was the favourite ſcheme of his cruel mind, it yet agreed not with his views; and, beſides, depended from the will of Zerir, who, though perpetually renewing his menaces, could not ſo eaſily be brought to extremities ſo contrary to the natural goodneſs of his heart.

Melec conſidering the moment that ſhould deliver him of Saheb, and conſequently of Zulica, as the critical one for Periſadeh to regain the affections of Zerir, and to reſtore him to virtue, was

was like a pilot whoſe ſhip lies between two threatening rocks, and who, deſtitute of courage and ſkill, inſtead of hazarding the purſuit of his voyage, remains floating on the dangerous ſtrait, and runs the riſk of being daſhed by ſome ſudden waves againſt the unpitying cliff.

In this perplexity he had ſpread the dark toils in which truth and calumny were artfully interwoven, and an emiſſary worthy of him had been ſent with this fatal implement of deſpair, in order to involve Periſadeh in it; but in vain he anxiouſly expected the news of his ſucceſs, and depended for it on thoſe who ſurrounded her; all his power, arts, and promiſes

promiſes had leſs influence on ſimple and uncorrupted ſouls, than the enchanting ſweetneſs and the dignified ſorrow of the unfortunate princeſs.

Thus, having no ſuſpicion of the real motive of Sitara for appearing at court in this critical juncture, he rejoiced at it, flattering himſelf that this princeſs, whoſe attachment for Zerir was generally known by her former care of him in the hour of danger, would aſk his ſupport in the deſign which he ſuppoſed her to have formed of ſupplanting her two rivals in a heart tired with oppoſitions and uncertainties; a proſpect which he eagerly ſeized

ſeized as the moſt favourable he could expect.

At the ſight of Sitara, a beam of joy enlivened the pale and emaciated face of the unhappy monarch; his eyes, which had been ſo long kindled with fury, and were now almoſt extinguiſhed by ſorrow, darted the ſoft ray of friendſhip and gratitude; and though at that inſtant he ſecretly reproached himſelf with his paſſion for Zulica as an inexcuſable injuſtice againſt the princeſs of Dilem, his bluſhes were ſoon overcome by the ſatisfaction of finding a heart ſo entirely devoted to him, and in which he could ſo ſafely depoſit the anguiſh of his thoughts.

If

If Sitara had reſolved to employ with Zerir the arms of reproof, his ſituation would have diſarmed her of theſe dangerous weapons; for, even the gentle voice of affection was ſtopped in its utterance by the emotion of her ſoul; and the abaſhed prince, being encouraged by her obliging trouble, having opened the lips of ſincerity, proceeded in the narration of his fatal love and the conſequences of it, with a warmth which increaſed at every word; as the iron, in the forge, increaſes in heat at every ſpark which the hammer draws from its fierce ſides.

The

The ſympathizing Sitara heard him without interruption, till her ſighs and tears having cooled his inflamed ſoul and melted his hardened grief, ſhe at length ſaid;

"It will not become me, my lord, to argue againſt the power of a paſſion which, alas! I fear is almoſt as irreſiſtible as you aſſert; much leſs am I at liberty to arraign your conduct: but permit me a plea, which ſuits the duty of my ſex and my zeal for your glory.

"When the unfortunate Sitara appeared firſt in your auguſt preſence with her cheeks covered with bluſhes that an impious

impious man had fixed on them; when ſhe was ſent back to your feet ſpurned by a father who was your irreconcilable enemy, did you not raiſe her from the duſt of confuſion and cheriſh her with the words of comfort uttered by the voice of benevolence? Did you not forget your own grief to ſooth hers? Did ſhe not find a place in your friendſhip though your heart was then filled with a juſt and well-grounded paſſion? Has your generous ſoul thus ſo much exhauſted its ſweet ſource of compaſſion and goodneſs, that it cannot beſtow a drop of it on the moſt beautiful and moſt unhappy Periſadeh?

" It

" It is not a ſtranger and the daughter of your enemy who comes to implore your pity for misfortunes of which you were innocent; it is a princeſs, in whoſe father you have found the glorious model of your valour, who claims your juſtice, when, alas! ſhe expected your love. You have ſought for her in a remote country; and when, at your preſſing ſolicitations, on the ſecurity of your faith, ſhe flies to your arms, ſhe found herſelf a priſoner in your kingdom, forſaken by you, and contemned by your flatterers.

" Oh! if you had ſeen a ſingle drop of the pure dew that falls in ſhowers

from her lovely eyes, I am certain, that all the charms of Zulica, which I do not intend to diſparage, would not have moved your heart like that tear, the precious offering of a truly ſenſible and innocent ſoul. Yes, my lord, this real Peri, in beauty and perfections, loves you with that exalted affection which ſhe requeſted as a gift attended with the ſupreme felicity, and capable of beſtowing it on the beloved object. You were in raptures at this noble requeſt: how little did you then foreſee the pangs that it would coſt you! for, ſurely, my lord, you muſt place that ineſtimable gem next to your heart; or return it to its native

native ſhell, and by this ſuſtain a loſs which you never can repair."

"O my good, my amiable friend; exclaimed Zerir in an agitation not to be expreſſed; it is thou, thou alone who can conduct my weary ſteps in this maze of troubles and difficulties: but pity my weakneſs. Although thou haſt in ſo lively a manner retraced to my mind the enchanted picture that my imagination had drawn of Periſadeh, Zulica ſtill reigns over my heart: inſiſt not on my ſurmounting an inſurmountable paſſion, and command every thing which is within my power.

"If thou thinkeſt that half my kingdom, or all my treaſures would be accepted as a reparation by the princeſs of Zableſtan, make the offer of them, and I will chearfully juſtify it. If ſhe will return to her father, order thyſelf the moſt magnificent retinue to conduct her; drench, if poſſible, her juſt reſentment with ſhowers of liberality; dry her tears with the hand of friendſhip; but do not leave me for her: innocence attends her ſteps, ſpreading around the balm of conſolation; remorſe adds to my grief and perplexity; and thoſe, who are moſt unhappy, have the juſteſt claim to thy generous tears."

"The

"The first obligation that such precious confidence imposes upon me, replied Sitara, is to help your return to virtue. Whatever may be the success of your love for Zulica; if you enter the path of duty, that now directs you to the princess of Zablestan, the consciousness of having done a just action, will open the asylum of peace to your mind. I will attend you in the painful road of reparation; for, as you are the offender, honor and equity require that your own lips should ask forgiveness, and propose the means of atoning for the injury."

"Dost thou presume, cried Zerir, that I can present myself before her

too-juſtly incenſed eyes? Ought I to add to my former treſpaſs the new inſult of ſeeing her charms, the poſſeſſion of which I muſt relinquiſh?"

"No; returned Sitara; her ſituation diſpenſes her with the law of appearing without a veil before the ſovereign of the country; and her modeſty will, without reluctance, conceal the ſun of her beauty from your eyes, though in revealing its rays ſhe would be ſure of ending her pains by inflaming your heart."

"But what ſhall I ſay in my defence? aſked Zerir: What eloquence can undertake ſuch a taſk?"

"Yours,

"Yours, my lord; anſwered Sitara: the heart of Periſadeh will not be proof againſt it any more than mine; they are both animated by the ſame ſentiment."

In ſaying theſe words, the inadvertence of which ſhe too late perceived, her lovely cheeks were ſuffuſed with conſcious bluſhes; but their roſy tint ſoon heightened in the arms of Zerir, who, by a fraternal embrace, thanked and rewarded her generous ſoul; having firſt promiſed to follow her in two days to the caſtle, or rather the priſon, of Periſadeh, and to conceal this excurſion from Melec.

Thus Sitara, who knew by experience that cauſtics of ſeverity irritate the wounds of love inſtead of curing them, had, by her gentle method, obtained what had been ſo ſternly refuſed to the wiſdom of Saheb, whoſe name ſhe had prudently avoided to pronounce, as his fate depended on that of Periſadeh.

When the diſconſolate princeſs of Zableſtan ſaw exulting ſucceſs on the countenance of her friend, a faint beam of hope cheared her afflicted heart; but when ſhe knew that all the expectations of Sitara were founded on the power that the charms of her converſation and of her elegant form had had upon Zerir,

rir, ſhe ſunk again into the gulf of dejection.

She, however, conſented to make the trial; but with the noble reſolution, if it ſhould not ſucceed according to her deſires, to releaſe Zerir from the promiſe of his faith, aſking him, for the only reparation, the liberty of Saheb; and to promote his happineſs, by endeavouring to place Zulica on a throne, from which, by her, ſhe was ſo unjuſtly excluded.

A ſtately and delightful bower, which embelliſhed the gardens of the caſtle, and raiſed its lofty trees to the ſkies, had a faint reſemblance with the immortal grove

of truth, in which Zerir had firſt met with Periſadeh. The dear remembrance had often brought the afflicted princeſs to this enchanting place: ſhe had taught the numerous choir of birds who inhabited it, to repeat her complaints; to mourn with her, while its odoriferous trees, receiving a new fragrance from her ſighs, bent their refreſhing boughs in token of gratitude. This ſpot was marked by Sitara for a new ſcene of love, for the ſeat of reconciliation and joy: ſhe prevailed upon Periſadeh there to receive the inconſtant monarch, with a dreſs like that ſhe wore in the labyrinth; and thither the complying princeſs repaired on the day appointed for the fatal interview.

Her

Her trembling frame was ſupported by the friendly arm of Sitara; and the agitation of her heart, which confounds the pen of deſcription, and mocks all compariſons, cannot be conceived, but by thoſe who have proved the exquiſite diſtreſs of a ſituation like hers.

Though Zerir came armed with his phrenetic paſſion for Zulica, he could not behold the firſt idol of his ſoul, preſented to his eyes ſuch as he had ſo long worſhipped her, without a tranſport which eraſed from his memory all the events that had paſſed ſince their ſeparation; but too ſoon his guilt having recalled his thoughts to the preſent odious circum-

ſtance, forced him to bend the brow of confuſion to the ground of deſpondence. Some incoherent words of excuſe and reparation were conveyed by his ſighs to the ear of Periſadeh, who having replied to him in the ſame ſtrain, but with that melodious voice by which his heart had been tuned to love, he relapſed into his former trance, and at length, throwing himſelf on his knees, repeatedly exclaimed;

"Canſt thou, daughter of Heaven, canſt thou pardon the guilty, the wretched, the repenting Zerir?"

"More

" More deſervedly wretched would be the heart which could not forgive, anſwered Periſadeh, even when forgiveneſs is not required by----"

She could ſay no more: for, in that inſtant a voice, more outrageous than the north wind in a tempeſtuous winter, made the air reſound with theſe dreadful words;

" Save your precious life, O king, infamouſly betrayed by two unworthy women! In a few moments, the prince Zalzer will ſurround this caſtle: revenge leads him on, deſolation marks his ſteps, which are directed by his treacherous ſiſ-

ter,

ter, who was too ſure of making you fall into her ſnares, and has promiſed to deliver you up as a victim deſtined to bleed at the ſhrine of reſentment and pride."

Indignation and fury ſuddenly ſucceeded in the heart of Zerir to returning love and repentance: he darted the deadly look of the baſiliſk upon Periſadeh, crying;

"Thus, artful woman, thus you ſupport the pretended nobleneſs of your laſt perfidious exclamation: but I will turn the inſidious words into an imprecation againſt yourſelf. Yes, if you retain any ſenſibility for accumulated offences, I will

will make you repeat in the anguiſh of your ſoul, *Deſervedly wretched is the heart which cannot forgive.*

"O my Zulica! whom I was ſo fatally going to injure, thou, thou alone merits the adoration due to beauty when adorned with candour and innocence."

In ſaying theſe words, he precipitately followed Melec, who continued preſſing him to retire, leaving Periſadeh ſenſeleſs in the arms of Sitara, whoſe heart was equally pierced by the cruel arrow of ſo unjuſt an accuſation and ſo cruel a reproach.

The

The real cauſes of an invaſion ſo unexpected to the impetuous monarch, ſo alarming to his afflicted ſubjects, and ſo fatal to the virtuous princeſs of Zableſtan, muſt now be traced to their diſtant ſource; and thoſe events muſt be unfolded by the hand of truth, which the finger of deſtiny had woven in the loom of time, and wrought into a web of ſo pernicious a texture.

As the paſſive ocean, when the winds have ceaſed to diſturb its liquid mirror, when the clouds have forgotten to murmur, and the tempeſt has exhauſted its fiery ſhafts, paſſes from its dreadful agitation to a motionleſs calm, and ſeems

to

to ſlumber in its immenſe bed; thus Kiſhtaſb, when the ſtorm of a laborious life was huſhed in the ſofteſt repoſe, and the ſweets of a throne had lulled him in a delightful ſecurity, ſunk into the lap of indolence, and ſuffered the reins of his empire to fall idly from his enervated arm. Senſual, but not vicious, voluptuous, but not effeminate, inactive, but not unemployed, he paſſed the revolving ſeaſons in a rich viciſſitude of delights and amuſements, which, how well ſoever they might have graced a youthful heir of a flouriſhing but private fortune, ill became the ſon of Lohoraſb and the ſovereign of Iran.

All Aſia adminiſtered to his various pleaſures, and the remoteſt iſles concurred in ſupplying his palace with works of ornamental elegance. His galleries ſeemed on flame with the glowing tints of animated pencil: China ſent her fineſt vaſes to decorate his halls; India diſarmed her elephants of their precious teeth to furniſh the material of his gates, and the heart of her mountains bled to ſtore him with rubies: his own coaſts enriched him with the bright daughters of the parent ſhell, and his own cities embelliſhed his floors with the woven labours of the changeful worm.

Not

Not only was the palace of Herat made proper for the reception of immortal genii; a new city, at his command, reared its head in Parſiſtan, and a new paradiſe appeared in the gardens of Iſtakhar. Art and nature vied with each other in adorning this lovely ſcene; nature ſupplied art with a perfect model of beauty, and art, by an exact imitation of her charms, made nature herſelf more beautiful.

Here the ſpacious lawns were covered with a perpetual verdure, and the wanton antelopes bounded over the turf; rivers were diverted from their ancient channels, and, inſtead of rolling over barren deſerts, now bathed the ſweeteſt flowers,

flowers, which communicated their fragrance to the flowing chryſtal.

All the vegetable and animal world, from the ſtately palm and lofty camelopard to the delicate jeſſamine and playful marmoſet, were known to Kiſhtaſb, and preſerved in his groves with a tender care. He had even learned to call by their name the bright conſtellations, which he obſerved from his marble towers, and he often paſſed a contemplative hour in waiting for the emerſion of ſome known luminary. The ſages and artiſts of the inventive Eaſt were ſupported with munificence in this philoſophic retreat, and concurred to de-

light

light the curious mind of their monarch with a variety not to be exhauſted.

The lovely Kenayoum often partook of theſe amuſements: but more attentive than her conſort to the proper employments of her ſex, ſhe preferred the care of ſeeing her turberoſes bloſſom, and feeding her many-coloured lowries with the ſugar of Egypt, to the labour of obſerving the ſtars, or the ſtructure of magnificent temples; till the birth of a prince, who was named Aſſendiar, engaged for a time her parental fondneſs, and, by filling with joy the boſom of Kiſhtaſb, ſpread a general beam of felicity over his people, who, believing

that

that his retired hours were ſpent in conſulting their welfare, were perfuming the ſkies with thn incenſe of their prayers for his happineſs.

In this charming intercourſe of pleaſure and meditation, the king of Iran paſſed his months without perceiving their progreſs: the winter was made leſs unpleaſing by his preſence in Herat, and in the heat of ſummer the bowers of Iſtakhar beheld him refreſhed by the cooling rivulets, or ſheltered by their odoriferous ſhade. But, though every part of his empire was replete with enchanting beauties, yet the diſtant provinces of Iran had no charms for Kiſh-

taſh,

taſb, and he never deigned to irradiate their borders with the auguſt and benevolent beams, which the eyes of a ſovereign owes to the whole extent of his dominions.

Whether his mind had begun to ſtagnate through the indolence of his life; whether he thought that a monarch ſhould ſit concealed behind the clouds of obſcurity, that his people, who could rarely behold his external form, might paint him in their imagination with perfections above a mortal; in ſhort, whatever were the deluding motives of his conduct, his Vizir, Giamaſb, ſecretly rejoiced at the ſupineneſs of a prince, who,

who, in chuſing him for the pilot in the vaſt ſhip of government, had expoſed it to rocks and quickſands, and even to the danger of a total wreck.

As the lion of Mazenderan, when the herdſman ſlumbers in his gloomy tent, rages all night among the defenceleſs heifers, whoſe mournful complaints are diſperſed by the winds which ruſh from the ſtormy Caſpian; thus Giamaſb, having rent from his heart the veil of a ſincere attachment to his lord, and having reſumed his natural character, began to govern the natives of Iran with the rod of oppreſſion.

His

His ambition was boundleſs as the ocean which roared around the ſhores of Multan, and the object of it was nothing leſs than the poſſeſſion of the many kingdoms which that ocean encircled. He thought that being the ſon of Kaikhoſru, who had conquered moſt of theſe kingdoms, and annexed them to the empire of Iran, entitled him to the throne, in preference to the ſon of Lohoraſb, and this imagined injury lay feſtering in his boſom.

Night ſucceeded to night, and the ſilver moon performed her changes with a juſt regularity; but the ſoul of Giamaſb was unchanged, and the few drops of

ſleep that his reſtleſs fancy ſuffered to deſcend on his eyelids, were ſoon ſhaken off, like the dew from a waving branch, by dreams of conſpiracies and rebellions, by the phantoms of ſovereignty, which played before his imagination. But the flower of his hope had ſcarce begun to bloſſom in the garden of his deep deſign: he ſaw that Kiſhtaſb ſtill ſat enthroned in the hearts of his zealous ſubjects, and while that ſacred ſeat remained inviolate, he knew that the monarch was fixed on a rock of adamant. Skilled as he was in tracing the various paſſions of men, and unfolding the dark volume of the human mind, he could not be ignorant that the boſom of well-grounded

lo yalt

loyalty is firmer than marble, and that the crimſon drops, which warm the heart of affection are more precious to a prince than a treaſure of rubies.

To diſplace his benefactor and his ſovereign from the throne of his peoples love, was, therefore, the firſt object of a man no leſs ungrateful than ſagacious, no leſs cruel than enterpriſing; but to preſerve his own popularity, while he rendered his king odious; to prepare his own way to the ſeat of empire by the ſame arts, which enabled him to make that ſeat vacant; this required an addreſs which could only be ſurpaſſed by his ingratitude and malice.

With this view he was gentle and affable to the lions of war, whoſe valour protected the metropolis, and drenched the heroes of Khoraſan with the ſhowers of his munificence. He affected even to ſympathize with the huſbandmen and artificers, whom he plundered to ſupply his capacious coffers; and he pretended to ſhed the tear of commiſeration, when he iſſued the repeated edicts, which deprived them of more than half the fruits of their honeſt induſtry.

When the firſt murmur of diſcontent came, like the faint hum of the ſummer fly, to the ear of Giamaſb, a ſudden fear ſeized his vigilant mind, leſt the plaintive

echo

echo ſhould haply repeat the ſtrain in the palace of Kiſhtaſb, if ever that ſequeſtered prince ſhould leave for a moment the receſſes, in which he was immured. In order, therefore, to confirm him in his preſent retirement, the Vizir, who well knew the inflexible obſtinacy of his temper, determined to counſel him againſt it; ſince a ſtubborn mind, like the ſtalk of a towering palm, returns more forcibly to its former ſtate, by being bent in a contrary direction.

Agreeably to this inſidious reſolution, he watched a favourable hour, when the king was weary with affixing his all-powerful ſignature to ſome papers of

ſtate, and was impatient to return to his bowers of ſolitude; which Giamaſb obſerving, addreſſed him with the voice of ſeeming affection, and ſaid;

"May proſperity, like the auſpicious bird of paradiſe, ſpread the ſhadow of her plumage over the head of Kiſhtaſb! May the eye of malevolence be dazzled with the radiance of thy glory! How long ſhall the ſun of majeſty be obſcured by the clouds of retirement, and the ſweet ſtream of virtue grow ſtagnant with inactivity? Have the plains of Khoraſan no charms for their ruler? Behold! they long to be preſſed by thy beaming ſandal,

ſandal, and complain that thy favours are laviſhed on the meadows of Iſtakhar.

"Let the words of wiſdom ſink deep into the ear of attention: leave thy retired manſion, and, burſting forth like the vernal ſeaſon, ſpread mirth and felicity around. The diamond is the ſovereign of gems, but its brightneſs appears not in the rock. The poliſhed ſhafts of the archer are ſtraight and beautiful, but they drink not the blood of the enemy, till they fly from the bow.

"What is ſweeter than the muſk of Khoten? but if it remain perpetually in the bag of the merchant, who can be re-

freſhed by its odour? Alas! what ſuperior excellence has Giamaſb, that his lord ſhould have exalted him to the helm of empire? His ſhoulders are bent beneath the ponderous load of affairs; and ſleep, which formerly ſoothed all his pains, has fled like a light vapour from his eyes. It were better for him to ſeek the ſolitary bower, and reſign the wand of ſovereignty to an arm that can wield it with becoming ſtrength."

While the Vizir was ſtringing the ungenuine pearls of feigned counſel on the thread of inſincerity, the cheeks of Kiſhtaſb were diſcoloured with various paſſions, and his heart was too large for the purple

purple walls that confined it. At length, with a frown, which to Giamaſh was neither unexpected nor unpleaſing;

"Doſt thou repine, ſaid he, ungrateful man, at the labours which attend thy ſtation; and doſt thou wiſh to lighten thy burden by transferring it to me? The delights of a palace, like mine, are not ſuited to a ſubject, nor are toils and ſolicitudes fit companions for a king. Know, that Kiſhtaſb never takes a reſolution, which wiſdom has not dictated, nor when he has once taken it, has he the weakneſs to deſiſt.

"Diſturb not my tranquility with expoſtulations; but be aſſured, that, if the voice of ingratitude ſhall again expreſs the ſentiments of indolence, if the blooming groves of Iſtakhar ſhall once more be ſullied by the breath of detraction, the fiery bolt of diſpleaſure ſhall fall upon thy head.

"Yet farther; perplex me not ſo often with theſe reſcripts and edicts: either my ſignature is unneceſſary, or it may be imitated by thyſelf, by the authority with which I inveſt thee. Go; and deſerve the continuation of my friendſhip, by a perfect ſubmiſſion to my will."

Giamaſb

Giamaſb retired with a reſpectful ſilence, and ſeemed by his dejected countenance to be ſenſible of his fault; but his heart was exulting of its ſucceſs, and meditating new acts of oppreſſion to be exerciſed againſt the ſubjects in the name of their monarch.

Every blade of graſs that gliſtened in the dew of the morning, every flower that opened its glowing cup in the garden of diligence, the ſilver rice, and the golden ſaffron, even the ductile rivulets, which art has taught to water theſe precious plants and promote their vegetation; in ſhort, not only the ſuperfluities, but even the conveniencies and neceſſary ſupports

of life, were taxed to more than two thirds of their value, and the remaining pittance was ſcarce ſufficient to procure the induſtrious gardener a ſlight defence, from the blaſt of the winter, and the cold damps of the night.

New penal laws were deviſed by Giamaſb and regiſtered in a private volume; there were they depoſited, like nets and deceitful implements in the armory of a hunter, as engines to deſtroy the ſubjects; and whoever offended againſt theſe unpromulgated decrees, was condemned without being appriſed of his crime: the fatal judgment were ſigned by Giamaſb, in the name of his lord, and the poſſeſ-

ſions

ſions of the guiltleſs criminal were confiſcated, to enrich the treaſure of the Vizir.

Nor was this enough: every father of a family, who, by a long courſe of perils by ſea, and labours by land, had ſecured to himſelf a dignified retreat, and adorned his manſion either with the rich tapeſtry of Ghilan, or the porcelain of Pekin, was marked out by the emiſſaries of Giamaſb, as the bounding roe or timorous hare are diſcovered by the ſcent of the ſagacious hound.

If men of this deſcription had not yet tranſgreſſed the dark injunctions of the

inſidious

inſidious book, new laws were immediately written in the bloody code, in which were purpoſely forbidden ſuch indifferent actions as they had before been ſeen to commit.

It was ſometimes made capital to apply the ſharp ax to the trunk of an uſeleſs tree, to fix the piercing arrow in the breaſt of a ravening vulture, to tranſplant a cypreſs-tree in the morning, or to gather dates after the ſetting of the ſun.

From theſe mercileſs inſtruments of power no innocence was ſecure; the moſt ſacred apartments of each manſion were violated on pretence of their concealing

cealing illegal furniture; the domes of the wealthy and the cottages of the poor were alike infested by the unfeeling ministers of arbitrary violence.

Nor were the oppressed nations even permitted to avoid this rigour by deserting their labours, and submiting to exile; they were brought back by force to the field and to the loom; where they toiled for a scanty subsistence, and were, in fact, the slaves of the Vizir and the army, who had thus in reality possessed themselves of all the cultivated lands in that extensive empire.

But

But Giamaſb was too wary to let the ſhafts of the general odium fall upon his head: when deputies arrived from the diſtant provinces to obtain redreſs from the throne of mercy, the Vizir, having intercepted the letters, harangued the meſſengers with the voice of affability, and entertained them at the table of munificence. He condoled with them for the oppreſſions, under which they groaned; and gave them hopes of a ſpeedy alleviation; but inſinuated that they flowed from a ſource, which it was not yet in his power to obſtruct.

"My life, added he, would infallibly be ſacrificed to the reſentment of tyranny;

ranny; and it is a ſacrifice, which, in due time, ſhall be readily offered: but I conjure you to be patient. If you loſe your protector, it will avail you nothing; and you will not, perhaps, have ſo genuine a friend in my ſucceſſor."

With theſe words he diſmiſſed them, charmed with his generoſity, and captivated by his eloquence, but ſuppreſſing with difficulty the murmur of indignation againſt the gloomy tyrant, who compelled ſo amiable a prince as Giamaſb to be the inſtrument of his oppreſſive ſway.

Such are the complicated miſeries of a people, whoſe monarch liſtens only to the

the whiſpers of his own inclinations, and abandons the rudder of dominion to the hand of another. Though his heart be encircled with a ſmiling train of virtues, yet his beſt qualities, by the management of artful miniſters, become more peſtilential to the ſubjects than the oppoſite vices; and the pure fountain, being envenomed, ſheds on all ſides its baneful influence.

The tyranny of Zohac, whoſe vices made all nature ſhrink with horror, was leſs oppreſſive, and productive of leſs miſery, than the ſupine benevolence of Kiſhtaſb; and the two ſerpents, which that impious uſurper nouriſhed with the blood

blood of his ſubjects, leſs voracious than the monſter, whom the ſon of Lohoraſb ſuffered to feed upon the ſighs of his injured people.

Nor was it enough to oppreſs the *civil* liberties of the Iranians; a ſhaft of more ſubtle venom remained in the quiver of malice.

The religion of the Perſians was from the earlieſt times as pure as the rivers which flowed over their plains; its ceremonies were few, and its ritual ſimple. They viewed the azure vault of Heaven, and the bright luminaries which adorned it; they gazed on the earth and ocean,

the

the foreſt and the floods, and they knew, that theſe wonders were formed by a Being of infinite power; as, when they looked on the palace of Kaikhoſru, they knew that it was raiſed by the hand of an architect. This inviſible and eternal power was the ſole object of their adoration; to him they bent the knee of devotion, and in his temple they diffuſed the fragrant odours of grateful praiſe.

But when the impious Zoroaſter had diſſeminated his new doctrine over the province of Pars, the purity of this divine worſhip was ſoon corrupted; and the contagion rapidly gained the neighbouring countries. The low populace, ever

ever fond of novelty, received his tenets with applauſe, and the *Zendaveſta* was read to the proſelytes as an inſpired volume.

The inſidious impoſtor, who had no other view than to aggrandize himſelf, and to reign with deſpotic ſway over the hearts of thouſands, was, however, ſtopped in his progreſs by the contempt with which Lohoraſb treated his doctrine, and by the prohibition he made to his ſectaries of approaching his royal ſeat. He then retired to his caſtle at Yezd, where he perſuaded the deluded inhabitants to raiſe ſplendid temples to the worſhipped fire.

Although

Although this mad credulity ſpread itſelf anew after the abdication of Lohoraſb, it was not general in Iran; many princes of illuſtrious race, many heroes of approved valour, many ſages renowned for their wiſdom, and particularly thoſe who had been diſciples of the excellent Locman, reprobated the daring impoſtor, and diſſuaded their fellow-citizens from embracing the pernicious hereſy.

Giamaſb had long entertained a ſecret correſpondence with Zoroaſter, and now profeſſed himſelf his zealous ſectary; not that he believed the leaves of the *Zendaveſta* to be replete with the words of truth; but, as his heart knew no religion,

gion, except ambition, and adored no deity, but gold, he could loſe nothing by a change of his external worſhip, and might gain a powerful acceſſion to his own ſtrength by the aſſiſtance of the impoſtor. So nearly allied are wickedneſs towards men and impiety towards Heaven! ſince thoſe, who have no benevolence for their fellow creatures, can have no ſenſe of gratitude or duty to their Creator.

From very different motives, which, though innocent, were by no means the dictates of wiſdom, Kiſhtaſb himſelf lent the ear of attention to the doctrine of impoſture. His Vizir had preſented him with

with a magnificent copy of the *Zend*, illuminated with the gold of Golconda, and ſcented with the perfumes of Khoten. The monarch was ſtruck with the ſublime obſcurity of the work; and, though the far greateſt part of it was unintelligible to him, yet, perhaps for no other reaſon, he believed it to be divine.

That the world was replete with miſery, diſcord and confuſion, he had learned in his early wandering through the valley of grief; but neither his experience nor his reflexion had taught him, from what fountain theſe calamities roſe. He, therefore, readily admitted the belief of an evil principle, whoſe perverſeneſs inclined

him

him to ſow the ſeeds of vice in the human boſom, and whoſe power enabled him to cheriſh the fatal plant, till it produced the fruit of infelicity.

He obſerved, that the all-enlightening ſun, by his potent influence, called the herbs from their winter's lethargy, and cloathed them in a freſh mantle of the richeſt verdure; that his heat gave life to the univerſe, and invigorated the whole ſyſtem of nature. This eaſily induced him to pay his adoration to the luminary of Heaven, and to preſerve the unextinguiſhed fire on the altars of ſuperſtition.

The conſcience of his people were ſtill left unconfined, and though their bodies were enſlaved, their minds were as free as the air which they breathed; but the policy of Giamaſb deprived them of that conſolation. He prevailed with his infatuated ſovereign to iſſue his irreſiſtible commands, that a temple of fire ſhould be elevated on columns of marble in every ſtreet of Herat, and that each inhabitant of the metropolis ſhould liſten to the ſtrain of the *Zendaveſta*, which was chanted by the artful *Deſtours*, at the firſt hour, when each returning ſun tinged the clouds with celeſtial gold.

They,

They, whom a zealous love of truth incited to diſobey this deteſtable injunction, were thrown into horrible dungeons, unleſs they could amaſs a ſufficient treaſure to pay the ranſom which avarice demanded.

The decrees for a total change of religious worſhip, were ſoon extended by Giamaſb to all the provinces of Iran; and heralds were diſpatched with proclamations to every chief who filled the ſeat of government, from the regions, which ſkirt the ſpacious Caſpian, to the mountains waſhed by the branching Indus.

While the murmur of complaint was echoed from hill to hill in the kingdom of Iran, and the plant of hate was taking root in the boſom of the perſecuted natives, the war againſt the king of Dilem engaged the attention of Zerir. The pencil of deſcription has already traced on the tablet of hiſtory the cauſes of this war, and the impetuoſity of the Kharezmian monarch: it has related the extremity in which he demanded a ſpeedy ſuccour from the arms of his brother, and the refuſal, which had filled with reſentment the heart of affection.

Let the ray of truth now pierce the ſhadow of obſcurity: Kiſhtaſb, immerſed in

in the depths of indolence, had neither heard the complaints of his people, nor gladdened his eyes with the ſight of the affectionate page in which his beloved Zerir aſked his expected aid. The vigilant Giamaſb had intercepted the letter, and, eagerly catching the breeze of opportunity to alienate from Kiſhtaſb the love of his brother, had written the harſh anſwer with the reed of malicious perfidy.

At length the active meſſengers, who had traverſed the empire of Iran on the fleeds of diligence, and borne to the remoteſt regions the decrees of ſovereignty,

returned to the palace of the Vizir, with diſmay painted in their countenance.

The provinces were ripe for a revolt. Some of the governors, indeed, had kiſſed the awful mandate with the lips of ſubmiſſion, and inſtituted the adoration of the glowing element in the ſeats of their dominion; but their hearts, already ulcered by former oppreſſions, had not ratified the conſent extorted by fears. Others had knit the brow of indignation at the receipt of the royal edicts, and, inſtead of returning the anſwer of compliance, had ſent back the ſtrongeſt remonſtrances to the throne of majeſty.

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The valiant Ruſtem, above the reſt, who ruled the fertile valleys of Zableſtan, peremptorily refuſed to enforce the new decree in his ample principality. Yet his generous breaſt diſdained to petition any power, but that of Heaven; he, therefore, had not concurred in the remonſtrances, but ſat with a conſcious dignity, ſupported by the firm pillar of virtue.

Giamaſb now ſaw his deep-rooted malice advancing to maturity; and knew that not a moment was to be laviſhed in vain delay. He conſequently determined to preſent the expoſtulatory letters of the governors to the retired monarch, carefully ſuppreſſing thoſe pages, in which the

dreadful liſt of his perſecutions and cruelties was unfolded. He well knew, that the heart of Kiſhtaſb would have been rouſed from its torpidneſs by the ſtrong impulſe of pity at the moving deſcription of his violences and oppreſſions: but he was alſo convinced that as long as the deceived monarch ſhould be perſuaded that the limits of his royal power encroached not barbarouſly on the right of humanity, he would extend them in proportion to the obſtacles preſented in his way. Thus being willing to avail himſelf of a fatal obſtinacy, and in order to find a ſhelter againſt every unforeſeen event, Giamaſb judged that an apparent ſincerity was indiſpenſable; he was alſo influenced in it by

by a deſign no leſs perfidious than all his other evil ſchemes.

The ſtately diſobedience of Ruſtem gave the greateſt anxiety to his ruffled mind. He was no ſtranger to the undaunted valour of that hero, which fame had borne on her radiant wing over all the regions of the habitable globe; nor could the inacceſſible ſtrength of his fortreſſes, and the bravery of his faithful troops, be unknown to a miniſter, whoſe emiſſaries were employed in every part of the empire. No other expedient then remained, but to win the friendſhip of that noble-minded warrior, to unboſom to him the ſecret counſels of his breaſt,

as far as he could give to them the colour of equity and good intentions, and to sue for his support in his audacious enterprise.

As no ambassador could be trusted with this weighty negociation, Giamasb resolved to seek the plains of Zablestan in person, and to pour the venom of his traiterous purpose into the ear of Rustem. With this design, he advanced to the palace, and prostrated himself before the destined victim of his treason.

When he was raised by the hand of benevolence, he thus pronounced the well dissembled harangue:

"Let

" Let the cheeks of thoſe, who reſiſt the commands of their ſovereign, be covered with the duſt of confuſion! Let their days be without comfort, and their nights without ſleep! Shall the king decree, and ſhall not his people bow the neck of obedience? Shall the ſtandard of oppoſition to his will be raiſed on the plains of temerity? Yet behold, O ruler of nations, the papers which thy ſervant bears! Attend; but let not the flames of thy reſentment burn too fiercely; leſt a general conflagration conſume the univerſe!

" Thy governors are intoxicated with folly, and dare to raiſe the voice of expoſtulation

poſtulation to the throne. They deſpiſe the adorable element, and refuſe to hear the notes of the divine *Zendaveſta*. They even cenſure other parts of thy conduct, and throw the veil of contempt over the beauties of thy virtue. Receive their letters, illuſtrious monarch, and convince thy boſom of my truth. Let not, however, the hand of rigour inflict too precipitantly the puniſhment due to their boldneſs.

" The prince of Zableſtan is the object of their conſtant imitation: as the palm tree appears among the ſhrubs of the wilderneſs, ſo Ruſtem ſhines among the chiefs of Iran. Myſelf, if my petition

tion win favour from my lord, will repair to the caſtle of the hero, and, by repeating thy powerful edict, ſtrike fear into a heart, which has not yet learned to tremble. His example will be followed by the reſt; and the troubled ocean of affairs will be reſtored to an univerſal calm."

At the ſight of expoſtulations from his ſubjects, the breaſt of Kiſhtaſb was inflamed with anger, and fury glowed on his cheek. He had not before been eagerly engaged in promoting the new religion; but, finding his order deſobeyed and his will oppoſed, he determined at once to enforce his decree with the extremity

tremity of violence. Yet he permitted Giamaſb to undertake in perſon the office of convincing the warrior of Zableſtan, and he conſented that, in the abſence of his Vizir, the reins of empire ſhould be held by Zoroaſter himſelf, whom he ſummoned to leave his retreat at Yezd, and haſten to ſupport with the counſels of wiſdom, the votaries of his myſtic doctrines.

The perfidious impoſtor, who had long been appriſed of the Vizir's machinations, advanced to the metropolis with ceremonious pomp, through ranks of infatuated zealots, who rent the ſky with acclamations, and crowded to kiſs the earth,

earth, which had been preſſed by the ſandal of their ſuppoſed prophet.

He was received by the king with extravagant honours; and Giamaſb, having inſtructed his pretended maſter, now become his real diſciple, in the myſteries of his iniquitous adminiſtration, departed in a ſumptuous litter drawn by ſteeds of Arabia, and directed his courſe towards the Zableſtanian mountains.

Ruſtem, in the mean time, was ſolacing his old age with the recollection of his paſt atchievements, and enjoying that felicity, which heaven promiſes and gives to all thoſe, who have promoted the welfare

fare of their country by the noble acts of their youth.

The venerable warrior was inciting his valiant ſons to imitate the labours of their ſire, and kindling their youthful boſoms with a generous ardour, by the relation of his bold adventures. Sometimes he partook of their martial exerciſes, and concurred in their vigorous ſports. His arm had not forgotten its priſtine force; and he could hurl with eaſe whole maſſes of ponderous marble, which the united ſtrength of the princes could ſcarce raiſe from the ground. His javelin ſtruck the target with ſuch aſtoniſhing firmneſs, that no hand, but his own, could draw it out from

from the wall of accumulated earth, in which it was deeply infixed.

Thus were the young heroes of Zableſtan learning to emulate the virtues of Ruſtem; as lions, whoſe eager fangs are yet unſtained with the blood of the traveller, imitate the tawny monarch of the foreſt, and view with wonder the corſes of thoſe ill-ſtarred wanderers, whom their father has layed proſtrate before his gloomy cavern.

The fair Periſadeh, to whoſe virtuous mind the dark ſcene of futurity was not unfolded, was then delighting her imagination with the beloved idea of Zerir; as

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the arrival of Saheb had not yet filled her boſom with tranſport.

Her brothers, Parviz and Zalzer, could not but obſerve the ſoft melancholy, which overſhadowed her brow ſince her return from the labyrinth; and they ſtrove to alleviate her care with a variety of amuſements. The ſkilful lutaniſt was called to play his lively deſcant before her bower, and the company of dancers bounded lightly through the ſhade. Many birds of variegated colours and melodious voice were preſented to her by the two princes, who vied with each other for the pleaſure of replacing the

the little favourite ſhe had loſt and inceſſantly lamented.

Though Parviz loved the princeſs with the tendereſt affection, yet Zalzer was moſt aſſiduous in aſking the cauſe of her uneaſineſs, and endeavouring to remove it. At her prayer, he had oppoſed the deſires of ſeveral princes, who panted after the poſſeſſion of ſo amiable an object; and had perſuaded his father to refuſe their demand. This had been aſcribed to an ambition, of which the young prince was not, in reality, exempt; but which would have not overbalanced the ſatisfaction of his beloved-ſiſter. He was neareſt to her in his age; and in perſonal

perſonal charms, as well as in mutual friendſhip; they were like two beautiful cypreſs, planted on the ſame bank, and ſprinkled by the dewy chryſtal of the ſame rivulet.

While the palace of Ruſtem was engaged in theſe various purſuits, Giamaſb was traverſing the plains and valleys, meditating nothing but treaſon and deceit: he ſeemed already cloathed in the imperial purple, and wore in his fancy the diadem of Iran.

His approach was ſoon wafted on the plumes of fame to the metropolis of Zableſtan, and Ruſtem prepared to receive with

with reſpectful ſolemnity the Vizir of a potent monarch, and the ambaſſador of a ſovereign to whom he owed allegiance.

On a ſtately courſer of Hegiaz, decorated with trappings of burniſhed gold and azure, like the luminaries of Heaven on the unclouded ſky, Giamaſb advanced to the palace, attended by troops of ſpearmen and archers. He was conducted with pomp into a ſpacious hall, not ornamented with the works of effeminate arts, but filled with the trophies of ancient victories and the ſpoil of vanquiſhed heroes.

Here he found the incomparable warrior giving leſſons of virtue to his ſons; but

but he desisted from his noble task, when he saw the Vizir, and arose from his exalted seat. He placed his respected guest on a radiant canopy, and, after an amicable discourse, on the journey of Giamasb, the glory of Kishtasb, and the beauties of his empire, the table of hospitality was covered with the repast of abundance, and the delicious stream, not then forbidden in Asia, flowed in deep channels between banks of figured gold, adorned with the plants of emeralds and the flowers of rubies.

The princes, Parviz and Zalzer, with all the commanders and nobles of Zableſtan partook of the sumptuous feast; and

and no ſounds were heard, but thoſe of feſtivity and mirth, till the dying tapers ſeemed to pronounce, that half the night had been beguiled by the charms of converſation.

It was then, that the inſidious Giamaſb, willing to revive the remembrance of his father Kaikhoſru, caſt his vigilant eyes on the trophies, which embelliſhed the magnificent ſalloon, and addreſſing himſelf to Ruſtem, with accents ſofter than melting honey, ſaid;

"How many hearts of virgins and matrons wept blood for their lovers and their ſons in that ever-memorable war, when

when thoſe arms were ſtripped from their poſſeſſor by thy lion-like valour! What torrents rolled in crimſon floods down the hills of Khoraſan, when the baſe uſurper * Afraſiab was compelled by thy lance to ſeek his paternal territory with confuſion and diſmay! I fear the rich pencil of fame has drawn in too ſplendid colours the portrait of Kaikhoſru in his early years: he was, unqueſtionably, noble, wiſe, and valiant; but ſo many virtues as are ſaid to have decorated his royal mind, even in the ſeaſon in which paſſions govern with a deſpotic ſway, can ſcarce be thought the portion of mortality.

" Let

* This was the grandfather of the Afraſiab mentioned in the precedent volumes.

"Let not the glowing tints of the picture, anſwered Ruſtem, induce us to ſuſpect the beauty of the original. Kaikhoſru was, from his youth, the moſt perfect model of an accompliſhed monarch that ever the blazing eye of Heaven beheld in its annual revolution.

"Attend, O my friends, and thou chiefly, my honoured gueſt, to the words of unadorned truth; and you ſhall know by what arduous ſteps that king of kings aſcended the temple of glory. Nor let any ſovereign hope to emulate his greatneſs, unleſs he habituate his mind, like Kaikhoſru, to the practice of every virtue, and the exerciſe of every labour.

Many an uſeleſs prince may ſlumber on his throne; but the ſceptre of true majeſty muſt be ſwayed by the hand of induſtry.

"What cavern is there ſo deep, or what iſland ſo remote, in which the trumpet of hiſtory has not ſounded the name of Kaikhoſru, and related his birth in the palace of an invading enemy, the mournful fate of his amiable father; the ſad flight and tedious wanderings of the lovely princeſs, from whom he ſprung?

"He received his education among rocks and in deſerts. His firſt arms were directed againſt the ravenous vulture or the

the cruel tyger; and his firſt mantle was the variegated hide of a panther, whom he had ſlain. In this wild habit he was ſeen by a general of Iran, and his features were known to the piercing eye of loyalty.

"He was no ſooner informed, that his grandſire Caicaus languiſhed to ſee him, than he mounted a ſteed, ſwift as the glance of lightning, and, attended by the bold Iranian, reached the border of the rapid Gihon. The river ſtopped not his progreſs; and a troop of Turanian horſemen, who were purſuing him, ſaw the waves divided by the ſtrong hoofs of his fiery courſer. He paſſed the flood,

like the crocodile of Egypt, while the princeſs, who gave him birth, was conducted over a ſafer ford; and they both arrived under fortunate auſpices at the palace of the Iranian monarch.

" Here the riſing ſun of ſovereignty blazed in the horizon of honour. Kaikhoſru diſplayed in his youth thoſe flowers of genius, which had bloſſomed in his childhood. He ſurpaſſed the warriors of his army in agility and valour; nor could the ſages, who diſpenſed the wiſe laws of his country, contend with him for the prize of juſtice and truth.

" If

"If you aſk, with what key he unlocked the golden caſket of excellence, the anſwer is conciſe and obvious. By labours of the body and exerciſe of the mind, he procured ſtrength and gracefulneſs to the one, ſolidity and readineſs to the other. He knew that labour was allotted to every mortal, and that monarchs, who aſpire to true glory, cannot be exempt from toil.

"When Kaikhoſru, at the command of his enraptured grandfire, aſcended the throne of Iran, the ſun of felicity beamed upon the people. Conqueſt hovered on radiant pinions over his armies, and his cities reſounded with the voice of grati-

tude. He glorioufly recovered the countries belonging to his empire, and juftly avenged the murder of his father.

" Here let me ceafe, left my narrative fhould lead me to actions, of which no inconfiderable part was performed by this arm: thefe let others relate. It is now fufficient to fay, that the ufurper and treacherous Afrafiab fell beneath the fcymitar of Kaikhofru, as a mountain-oak yields to the violence of the biting axe. This only let me add; whatever fums of gold were levied by this model of princes, or by his valiant predeceffors, during the wars of Turan, and which were raifed through neceffity, not by the wantonnefs

of

of oppreſſion, were reſtored to the ſubjects, and deſcended, like refreſhing ſhowers after the drought of ſummer, into the lap of the exhilarated natives. An example, which the ſovereigns of Aſia ſhould ſeduloufly imitate, a path, in which the rulers of nations, ought ever to tread."

The ſubtle Giamaſb ſoon perceived, through this eulogium of Kaikhoſru, an occult diſapprobation of the preſent reign: yet he knew that the character of a complete monarch had been traced by the pencil of truth, and that the memory of the conqueror of Afraſiab was no leſs

freſh than dear to the heart of the invincible hero.

So far the ſhip of his malicious enterpriſe was ſailing down the current of ſucceſs, and impelled by the breezes of hope. He imagined that a ſon of Kaikhoſru would eaſily win the favour of Ruſtem; yet he delayed that night to diſcloſe his miſchievous intentions; and, having expreſſed in the moſt extravagant rhetoric his admiration of the perfect king of Iran, he roſe from the ſeat of luxury, and was attended by obſequious pages to the apartment of repoſe.

But

But the downy pillow, which ſoon lulls to ſleep the virtuous and honeſt man, is a neſt of ſcorpions to the evil minded. The princes of Zableſtan, enjoyed the calmeſt tranquility, and refreſhed their limbs, tired with heroic labours, in the balmy dew of reſt. The Vizir alone was agitated with tempeſtuous paſſions, and his broken ſlumbers ſcarce allowed him the neceſſary eaſe which the condition of humanity requires.

No ſooner had the morning ſkirted the light clouds with a purple border, than the reſtleſs Giamaſb aroſe from his reſtleſs couch. He found the hero and his ſons making preparations for a war-

like pageant, which they deſigned to exhibit before the Vizir of Kiſhtaſb. Coronets of olive, or wreaths of bay, were the prizes propoſed to the youthful nobles, for the greateſt acts of addreſs or ſtrength.

When the exerciſes were finiſhed, and the victors crowned by the diligent herald, the young princes retired with modeſt reſpect, and Giamaſb, finding himſelf alone with the unconquered warrior, thus addreſſed him with words of perfidy:

"The praiſes of Kaikhoſru, which flowed in a ſtream of eloquence from thy

thy zealous lips, O thou deliverer of Iran, have ever ſince reſounded on my enraptured ear. He was truly great, and his virtues are ſuperior to deſcription. But alas! the ſhoots of the lofty palm cannot attain the height and ſtatelineſs of the parent tree, when tranſplanted into a debaſed ſoil: the young lion emulates not the father of the cavern, when his neck is forced to bend under the yoke as the vile ox: nor can my complaints be deemed prepoſterous when the people of Iran groan for the injuſtice done to me; when thoſe who have uſurped my place, ſeem to confeſs themſelves unfit for it. Behold! Lohoraſb, ſpends his life, like an hermit, in the towers of Balkh; and

his ſon, the lord of nations, the monarch, whom I ſerve, and wiſh to reſpect, paſſes his youth in an arrogant retreat, ſecluded from the vulgar eye, which he deems unworthy to gaze on the effulgence of majeſty.

"There he forms in his unalterable mind the moſt oppreſſive, and tyrannous deſigns, of which the execution and the conſequences fall upon me. Hear, mighty warrior, nor let thy generous ſoul be offended at my ſpeech! My heart ſhed bloody drops, when the iniquitous decrees paſſed through me to the people of Iran. My boſom was fired with indignation, when the heralds were enjoined

to proclaim, from thy territories to the verge of Caucaſus, a total abolition of our former worſhip. I reſpect the virtues of Zoroaſter, and think his philoſophy ſublime: but compulſion and cruelty were ever far from this breaſt.

"I foreſaw that thy elevated ſpirit would never ſubmit; and, under the pretext of perſuading thee to obey the imperial mandate, I have viſited thy palace. Let my true errand be now diſcloſed by the voice of ſincerity.

"The Iranians abhor the tyrant, and acknowledge with gratitude the alleviations of their miſery, which my counſels have

have procured: they know, that, at the hazard of my head, I have frequently ſoftened the rigour of oppreſſion, and blunted the edge of ſeverity. Now they confeſs a truth, of which thou, O lion of combat, art well informed, that the title of Lohoraſb to the diadem of this potent empire, cannot be ſupported by the teſt of juſtice, when the ſon of the moſt perfect monarch, of the immortal Kaikhoſru, is able to wear it with dignity.

" Let then thy love for that father of his ſubjects, be manifeſted by thy affection to me. Sceptres and thrones ſhall be thy recompence; kingdoms and principalities ſhall lie before thy feet. One

ſtroke

ſtroke of thy battle-axe will diſperſe an army, if any army can be raiſed in defence of a tyrant."

Although the breaſt of Ruſtem was ſwelled with diſdain at the boldneſs of the traitor, yet the laws of hoſpitality forbade him to unload the weight of reſentment which oppreſſed his ſoul.

"Return, ſaid he, O inſidious man, return to the palace of thy injured lord: there atone, by ſubmiſſion and repentance, for the daring impieties of thy adminiſtration. Laws, which Ruſtem dares not infringe, permit him not to ſend thee to Herat in galling chains; but know, that

that this lance, which I now wield, whoſe very ſhadow fills thy ſoul with terror, can puniſh baſeneſs and iniquity in what region ſoever the monſter inhabits.

"Reſtore the liberties, corporal and mental, of the oppreſſed Iranians, whom thou, thou alone, perſecuteſt under the ſanction of a good, though imprudent and ill-adviſed monarch; or expect from my power an ignominious puniſhment. Go; depart.----Of thy relation to Kaikhoſru dare no more to ſpeak: he would himſelf renounce thee for his ſon, as he did, more than once, when the baneful tree of thy bad inclinations ſhoot forth its envenomed fruit, even from its firſt growth.

growth. I will never ſuffer the name of my friend to be thus debaſed by thy pretended claim. A ſerpent of the foreſt is thy father; thou canſt pretend to no inheritance but that of the thickets. But, admitting that thou ſhould not have deſerved to be excluded from the throne, the choice of the people would have ſuſpended thy right; and the ſovereign whom their voice has elected, ſhall be ſupported by the ſpear of Ruſtem."

Thus ſpoke the indignant hero; and left the diſappointed Giamaſb, like a tyger wounded by the ſhaft of the hunter. Rage and grief almoſt ſtifled him; and his deſperate heart now ſuggeſted nothing but

but what was violent and ſanguinary. But, fearing the anger of the Zableſtanian, whoſe word would have cruſhed him to atoms, he ſummoned his retinue, and returned to Herat with fury and vengeance boiling in his veins.

He found, on his arrival, the ſequeſtered king engaged in the ſame indolent purſuits, and revolving in the ſame circle of inactive pleaſure. Zoroaſter, by his inſinuating eloquence, had captivated the heart of the monarch; and had governed the empire, in the abſence of Giamaſb, with uncontroulable ſway.

To

To this impoſtor the Vizir related his diſappointment in the court of Ruſtem, and imparted his reſolution of purſuing the moſt deſperate meaſures; of raiſing, by ſome oppreſſions, an inſurrection in the metropolis; of depoſing Kiſhtaſb, and placing himſelf on the ſeat of royalty; promiſing to this his accomplice innumerable treaſures, the richeſt government of Iran, the title of prophet, and the adoration of his deluded ſubjects.

In the mean time, the hero of Zableſtan, ſuſpecting that Giamaſb would raiſe the bloody hand of rebellion in the towers of Herat, ſent his ſon Zalzer with a choſen troop of youthful warriors, and inſtructed

inſtructed him to apprize the inattentive ſovereign of his danger; to inform him of his Vizir's ambition, and adviſe him to cheriſh no longer in his boſom two vipers of deadly venom.

The prince, delighted with the idea of traverſing new provinces, and diſtinguiſhing himſelf by his accompliſhments at the court of Kiſhtaſb, received the command with joy ſparkling in his eyes. He tenderly bade farewell to his lovely ſiſter, and, ſtill ſuppoſing that her melancholy aroſe from the loſs of her favourite bird, promiſed to exert his utmoſt diligence to recover the pratling fugitive. Periſadeh ſhed a tear of affec-

tion

tion at his departure, then little apprehending, how ſoon ſhe ſhould herſelf leave the palace of Ruſtem, and what anguiſh the hand of deſtiny was preparing for her.

Zalzer, followed by five hundred valiant youths, like an eagle attended by a train of his airy vaſſals, was borne over mountains and vales by his rapid courſer. All night he purſued his journey like a ſtar in the firmament, and he repoſed, during the heat of noon, in his cool pavilion, pitched by the ſide of winding rivulets.

At

At length, the glittering turrets of the gay metropolis preſented themſelves to his enlightened eyes; and he entered the ſplendid city amidſt the repeated acclamations of the wondering crowd.

The Vizir in the mean while, to whoſe vigilance no ſecret could long remain concealed, was advancing to meet the ſon of Ruſtem, whoſe errand he ſuſpected from the diſcourſe of his irritated father. He conducted the unwilling prince to his own palace, where the accumulated wealth of his coffers was laviſhed to entertain the valiant youth with profuſe magnificence. Some pretext was eaſily alledged to delay his acceſs to Kiſhtaſb,

Kiſhtaſb, and the manſion of the Vizir afforded ſuch exquiſite delights, that Zalzer almoſt began to ſend the orders of his ſire, down the ſtream of forgetfulneſs.

Each morn ſuggeſted a new excuſe to Giamaſb, for not introducing the illuſtrious gueſt to the throne of majeſty; and the prince, captivated with the eloquence, and won by the ſervile attention of him, againſt whom his complaints were brought, grew, by degrees, to hear him with pleaſure, and to think him unjuſtly accuſed.

By this time the fair Periſadeh, as it has been already related, had left her paternal abode, and, attended by the excellent

cellent Saheb, had arrived in Kharezm. Let not a tale ſo full of anguiſh be repeated; it need only be made known, that Giamaſb, who had ſhuddered at an alliance ſo contrary to his views, received with tranſport the explicit narration of the whole tranſaction; that the confinement of Periſadeh was painted, by his watchful emiſſaries, in the colours of livelineſs, and the conduct of Zerir was cenſured with the words of aſperity.

This the inſinuating traitor inſtantly imparted to the brother of the injured princeſs, whoſe ſurpriſe could only be ſurpaſſed by his rage and indignation. The Vizir inflamed his wrath, and threw the

the oil of his malicious ſpeech upon the fire of his paſſion. He urged the neceſſity of vindicating his ſiſter's honour, the facility with which Zerir might be ſubdued, as being now delivered up to his natural raſhneſs and imprudence, by his miſintelligence with Saheb; he expatiated largely upon the motives of complaint that the Kharezmians had againſt a king, whoſe impetuoſity perpetually expoſed them to ruinous wars; and, in ſhort, he ſolemnly promiſed Zalzer to ſupport him in the right of keeping a conqueſt made with ſo juſt motives.

The name of conqueror, and the idea of a kingdom, filled the ambitious youth

with a joyful alarm: he panted for the delivery of Periſadeh; and was eager, as a lion of Ghilan, for battle. The embaſſy to Kiſhtaſb, and the commands of Ruſtem, faded on his memory, like the roſe plucked from its verdant ſtalk; and he gave immediate orders to his intrepid guards to follow his banners againſt the inſulter of his family.

Giamaſb checked his ardour for a moment by repreſenting to him that his ſtrength was not ſufficient for an enterpriſe of ſo much conſequence; but he aſſured him of a firm ſupport from the mountaineers of Shirvan and Dagheſtan, thoſe untamed banditti, who had before been

been formidable to the Kharezmians, and whom the Vizir himſelf had abetted in the invaſion of the king of Dilem.

To the chief of theſe robbers, Giamaſb recommended the prince of Zableſtan, who leaving Herat, with impetuous vehemence, directed his courſe towards the mountains, whence being reinforced by an army of hardy plunderers, he entered Kharezm, and marched to the caſtle of Periſadeh; thus opening a new ſource of tears to the amiable princeſs, whom he burned to avenge, in the very inſtant that repenting love ſeemed going to heal the wounds of her former grief.

The impious Vizir had no ſooner diſperſed the tempeſt which threatened him, by the removal of Zalzer, and, at the ſame time, ſecured his evil deſign by involving Zerir in a dangerous war; than he concerted meaſures with his confederate Zoroaſter for depoſing Kiſhtaſb from the ſeat of empire. The people of Iran, haraſſed to extremity by the oppreſſions of the adminiſtration, which the deluded nation aſcribed wholly to the monarch, were impatient for a revolution; and the army, corrupted by the gold of Giamaſb, had formed the reſolution of placing the diadem on his brow.

Ripe

Ripe as they were for a tumult, ſome pretence was wanting for beginning the rebellious work, or rather ſome of thoſe events, which warm the multitude, and burſt aſunder the girdle of patience. This was ſoon effected by the malice of Zoroaſter, whoſe artful inſinuations had gained for ſome time an aſcendant over Kiſhtaſb.

The young Asfendiar, whoſe ſmiling infancy gladdened the heart of the lovely Kenayoum, and ſeemed to foretel the glories of his riper age, was choſen to be the victim of this dark conſpiracy. The impoſtor perſuaded the too eaſy king, that, by the inſpiration of Heaven,

as well as by his obſervation of the ſtars, he foreſaw great dangers to the kingdom, from the ſtubborn ſpirit of the prince; which could only be avoided by confining him in a brazen tower, where he might lead a retired, but unambitious life.

The beautiful infant was accordingly ſeized in the lap of his afflicted mother, and led to his gloomy priſon, through the ſtreets crowded with murmuring inhabitants, who lamented the fate of the little innocent more than all they had themſelves ſuffered.

The

The evening had ſcarce thrown her duſky veil over the hills, when a multitude, armed with lances and ſcimitars, aſſembled round the tower, and, demanding the delivery of Aſfendiar, attacked the royal guards with fury.

The city preſently became a ſcene of confuſion; and a loud clamour, mingled with imprecations againſt the ſuppoſed tyrant, was followed by the univerſal cry of proſperity to Giamaſb, ſon of Kaikhoſru, the rightful ſovereign of Iran.---- The leaders of the rebels then produced the Vizir to the people, and having decorated his temples with the diadem, were conducting him to the regal manſion.

At this ſudden blow of fortune, Kiſhtaſb was rouſed from his lethargy; but finding himſelf deſerted by his guards and attendants, he ſaw the inutility of a deſperate courage, and had only time to eſcape by a private gate in the diſguiſe of a labourer. After having paſſed the precincts of the city, he bent his lonely ſteps towards Balkh, where his father Lohoraſb had long lived in a ſecure retirement.

All night he traverſed the woods and deſerts with a heart ſtung with anguiſh: in the morning he heard the valleys ring with the fame of his own diſgrace; and upon aſking the cauſes of the revolt, was informed

informed of all the cruelties which had ſo long been exerciſed in his name.

As a ſleeper awakened in the midſt of of a deluſive dream ſtarts at the returning beams of the morning; ſo Kiſhtaſb, being ſtruck by the voice of truth, repented, but too late, of his ſupineneſs. A new weight was ſoon added to his load of affliction; for, on his approach to Balkh, he found that Argiaſb, treacherouſly breaking the treaty of peace, had taken that city, and cauſed the ſoul of the venerable Lohoraſb to leave its terreſtrial manſion.

No hope remained to his diſconſolate mind: he heard proclaimed in every town, an offer of immenſe wealth to the bearer of his head; and though his former retirement, by making him unknown, helped now to ſecure his life, yet he learned, by ſad experience, that innumerable calamities await a monarch, who, retiring from the helm of government, leaves the ſafety of his people and of himſelf in the hands of perfidy and ambition.

With this reflection, and with reſolutions of a far different conduct, if heaven ſhould reſtore him his diadem, the royal wanderer paſſed his days in caverns and foreſts,

foreſts, and his nights in purſuing his courſe towards his brother, of whoſe ſituation he was ignorant, and on whoſe love he depended; neither conſidering that, the ſame wary malice, which had found means to drive him from his dominions, could not have omitted to deprive him of ſo natural a reſource; nor that, the abyſs of ruin having many deſcents, Zerir might have been precipitated into it by impetuouſneſs, as well as himſelf by indolence.

A mind oppreſſed by ſudden misfortunes, is generally bewildered in the darkneſs of crowding thoughts; and ſelf-reproach, infinitely more galling than

chains, depreſſes fortitude itſelf. Thus Kiſhtaſb, who formerly had by his ſagacity tamed a band of ferocious banditti, who had undauntedly ſeen their ſcimitars pointed at his breaſt, not only was now incapable of the moſt obvious combinations, but even robbed of his wonted courage; and he fancied himſelf, at every ruſtling of the leaves, to be purſued by inhuman murderers.

His being diſarmed, was the principal cauſe of his dejection: he trod the path of caution and fear, and conſequently rendered his march longer and more tedious than it really was; applying for ſubſiſtance to the bountiful trees, whoſe bending

bending branches offered their delicate gifts; to the fertility of a ſoil, ſpontaniouſly producing a variety of excellent vegetables; and to the liberality of a thouſand clear and tranſparent rivulets, which ſeemed to attend the roving ſteps of the weary traveller.

To find ſuch a luxuriancy of real wealth in lonely receſſes, after having ſeen moſt of the inhabited places around his metropolis marked with the finger of deſolation, at firſt filled Kiſhtaſh with wonder, but at length he acknowledged that the corrupted policy of men perverts and frequently deſtroys all the good which nature intended to them.

As he had retired one morning to a close thicket in order to supply by its gloomy shade the propitious mantle of night; he there found a complete armour lying between the corses of two youths, whose features retained in death the same impression of envy and covetousness that had apparently animated them against each other in their last moments; which supposition was confirmed by their respective wounds.

At the dismal sight, Kishtasb shed a tear of compassion over these unhappy victims of human folly, whose eagerness for enjoyment so often untimely precludes the pursuer from the power of enjoying.

He

He covered the miſerable relicks with buſhes and briars, to defend them againſt the outrages of the wild beaſts; after which, taking the contended prize as a providential boon, and concealing himſelf under the refulgent ſteel, he continued his journey with alacrity; no more relinquiſhing the benefit which the luminary of Heaven diſpenſes around from his ſeat of brightneſs.

He had already ſpied the rolling waves of the Gihon from the top of a high mountain, and thought himſelf within the reach of his wiſhed-for aſylum, when he ſaw in the valley two warriors engaged in the moſt unequal combat. One of them,

ſupported

ſupported by ſeveral ſlaves, bluſhed not to take ſo cowardly an advantage againſt his adverſary, who oppoſed to the multiplied blows he received a valour and intrepidity which filled the heart of Kiſhtaſh with admiration, and revived in it all the ſparks of native generoſity.

The proſcribed monarch forgetting the danger of being diſcovered, impelled by the tender emotion which virtue excites, and by the juſt indignation which baſeneſs deſerves, flew to the injured hero; and having diſperſed the crowd of his vile attackers, ſaw him overthrow and diſarm his enemy, who panted under his ſtrong

ſtrong graſp as the lamb in the lion's fangs.

In that inſtant, a beautiful and trembling damſel, ruſhing from behind ſome trees, threw herſelf at the knees of the victor, exclaiming:

"Oh! ſpare, ſpare him! Do not imbrue in blood that dear hand which I long to preſs with the tranſports of tenderneſs! He is my huſband only by compulſion: let this title, to which I have not yet acquieſced, at leaſt ſave his life! Let him go; and keep me as a faithful companion in any fortune which may attend you!"

"Riſe,

"Riſe, ſaid the valiant man to his devoted victim, and thank the lovely lips which have pronounced thy merciful doom."

"May a thouſand deaths be my portion, cried the inraged huſband, rather than I ſhould ſubmit to my ſhame. Plunge, bury thy dagger in my breaſt, ſince I can expect only an infamous treatment from thy unjuſt heart, add crime to crime, and may the wrath of Heaven arm a ſtronger hand than mine with the dreadful bolt which muſt at length cruſh thee."

At theſe offending words, the noble warrior ſeemed to breathe fire through the viſer of his helmet; he had already raiſed his formidable ſcimitar upon his provoking enemy, when ſuddenly checking himſelf, he pauſed ſome moments; then turning to the fair tempter of his honour, ſaid;

"O thou idol of my ſoul, pity thy unhappy lover, who is obliged to reſign thy charms to an hated rival: his obſtinate reſolution to poſſeſs thee, his preſent deſpair, are thy ſecurity; and this muſt be ſufficient for me. I cannot rob him of a treaſure which he held in more eſtimation than the life thou aſkeſt for him.

No;

No; the thought of ſo unworthy an action would for ever blaſt my expected felicity. Let me then forgive, as true greatneſs requires, the raſhneſs of his tongue, and the baſeneſs of his defence, which is, perhaps, too much juſtified by my unjuſtifiable attack. Alas! I muſt be indulgent to a paſſion which I have myſelf carried to exceſſes, for which I never can ſufficiently atone. I fly from thee: may each pang, that this ſeparation will coſt me, add one happy day to thy innocent life!"

In ending theſe words, he precipitately retired, followed by Kiſhtaſh, who was no leſs agitated than he, though from

a different cauſe. Both haſtened to a wood, whoſe waving boughs ſeemed to quiver at the moving ſcene they were to be witneſs of. Then Kiſhtaſb, lifting up his beaver, exclaimed:

"O my deareſt brother! my beloved——!"

He could ſay no more: love and joy ſtifled his voice in the encircling arms of Zerir, whoſe excellence of heart admitted not the leaſt remembrance of the apparent injury he had formerly received from Kiſhtaſb. A tender anxiety for each other was the only intruder in their fraternal embrace; ſilence and tears the

only

only expreſſions of their enraptured ſoul. At length, Kiſhtaſb, looking mournfully at his brother, ſaid;

"Are we then fallen into the ſame gulf of miſery? Was it there that we were to meet again?"

"No, replied Zerir, we cannot be unhappy ſince we are once more reunited; we were truly ſo at our laſt ſeparation; a crown cannot make amends for the loſs of brotherly love; and I ſhall not regret mine if I am reinſtated in your friendſhip, if you diſpoſe of my life to redreſs your wrongs. I have juſt now been apprized of what a traitor has dared

dared againſt you, but I am ignorant of the horrid circumſtances. As to me, I have not contended with dark malice, I have fought againſt virtue itſelf, and, to my eternal confuſion, I have overcome it."

"Let us retire to a ſafer place, returned Kiſhtaſh, and there explain, deplore, and, if poſſible, repair our paſt faults."

In ſaying this, they advanced towards the thickeſt part of the foreſt, where they eſpied a ſmall cottage ſurrounded by a large garden, which incloſure was compoſed of hurdles and thorny ſhrubs.

The

The two greateſt monarchs of Aſia could not ſee this homely retreat without panting after it: their gilded palaces, their delightful bowers, had never attracted their eyes ſo much as the thatched hut and the wild orchard: ſince deſire, and conſequently real enjoyment, are ſo intimately connected with want, that it is impoſſible for wealth to exclude the one and to retain the others.

While, with an eagerneſs of expectation which they had never experienced, Kiſhtaſb and Zerir were obſerving whether the wiſhed-for retirement was really deſerted as it ſeemed to be, they heard its flight walls reſound with the voice of complaint;

complaint; on which, having made themſelves a paſſage through the weak fence, they found an old man lying on the rough floor in the attitude of the utmoſt grief. One of his hands ſupported his trembling head; whilſt the other yet held the white locks it had rent. At the haſty ſteps of the royal intruders, he turned his diſtracted looks upon them; but no ſooner had he viewed Kiſhtaſb, than falling in a tranſport which ſeemed above his ſtrength, he cried;

"O monſter, born for my deſtruction, art thou returned to compleat it? Was it not ſufficient for thee to have robbed me of my only treaſure, and

consequently of my life? Must thou imbitter my last moments, and force me to blaspheme the power who can prolong after my death the excruciating pain which thou impiously inflicted upon me?"

He would have continued in that strain, but Kishtash was too much affected to support it longer; he lifted up his beaver, saying:

"Look better on me, unhappy man; and accuse me, if thou canst, as the author of an affliction which my heart sincerely partakes and burns to relieve!"

"Pardon,

"Pardon, replied the abashed stranger, pardon my error! thy sweet affability, the awful majesty of thy face have not the least resemblance with the ferocious mien and the insidious smile of my cruel enemy. Thy armour deceived me, and still I remain in the most perplexed doubt. Oh! if thou pityest the weakness of my age and my forlorn condition, tell, oh! tell me, if that fatal steel has always been in thy power, or if fortune has made it fall into thy hands?"

Kishtab answered these pressing questions with the words of truth, which proved to be envenomed shafts to the heart of the unfortunate hearer, who

raiſing his ſtreaming eyes to Heaven, ſaid,

"O Providence, to whoſe decrees I muſt ſubmit, haſt thou entangled the deceiver in his own ſnares! But let me ſearch no further into the deep horror of thy juſt doom; too much of it is already revealed to me. And you compaſſionate warriors, continued he with the ſedate countenance of deep-rooted deſpair, liſten to the words of a wretched father, and let his dreadful fate be recorded in the annals of atrociouſneſs.

"I had two ſons, when the death of a beloved conſort made me chuſe this lonely

lonely habitation for the aſylum of ſorrow. I thought that theſe tender plants, reared up by paternal love, would here be bent according to the inſtitution of nature, and I kept them from the depravation of ſociety with unwearied care and ſolicitude. The paſtimes of their infancy, the harmleſs pleaſures of their youth, warmed my blood with a new life: but can I recall the pleaſing hours from the abyſs of eternity? Muſt not the horrid minutes which have ſucceeded to them eraſe their remembrance?

"The radiant ſun has thrice bluſhed at the perverſeneſs of mankind in his wonted round, ſince an emiſſary of Gia-

maſk unfortunately found my retreat. He aſked the roof of hoſpitality, and I granted it, though not without an inward and ominous reluctance. We ſat at the table of frugality, which we endeavoured to relifh by cheerfulneſs, but it was not long before anxious ſurmiſes invaded my mind. I ſaw deceit in the eyes of my gueſt, and perfidy in his careſſes to my ſons, who inattentive to his words, were only enraptured with his ſhining armour. Their fatal emotion was obſerved by the cruel wolf, who inſtantly whetted the claws of his rough eloquence againſt my ſimple lambs. Young men, ſaid he, you ſeem to admire my martial dreſs: follow me, and I will put it into your

power

power to be clad in the ſame bright-neſs. The new monarch of Iran, who is an inexhauſtible ſource of good-neſs and liberality, will pour ſtreams of gifts upon you, and preſent you with a ſuit of the ſame mail, which you ſhall be entitled to change, if the firſt man whom you ſhall kill in his ſervice has a better one.

"I ſaw the impreſſion that his ſeducing ſpeech made on the unwary ſtriplings; and with a voice altered by anger and fear, exclaimed;

"Ceaſe, oh! ceaſe a raillery, which cannot but pain a tender father: for,

ſurely, you dare not violate the law of hoſpitality by depriving me of my ſons; nor can they be perſuaded to ſo unnatural an action.

"What can you do for them, replied he coldly? Will you bury them alive in your gaping grave? I offer them honours, riches, all that the world moſt value. I force not their will, let them chooſe.

"Our choice is made, cried they both; and provided we are made ſure of an armour like yours, we are ready to attend your ſteps.

"Theſe

"These words, spoken in a resolute and remorseless tone, exhausted my patience.

"Infamous agent of an usurper, said I, dost thou think that the crimes of thy boasted master are unknown to me? I am not so much secluded from the world as not to have heard of them: but, if necessity had not forced me to visit the neighbouring villages, the beasts of the forest would have conveyed the detestable account to my ear. The wretched Iranians have long groaned under the rod, with which he intended to drive from them their lawful sovereign; and now he affects a mildness, whose con-

cealed venom is more fatal than the naked ſword of cruelty. But, if he deſires to ſubdue our affection by a happy change in our ſituation; let him not ſubſtitute corruption in the place of tyranny. A tyrant only enſlaves the body, and under his oppreſſive ſway the ſubjects enjoy, at leaſt, the conſolation which attends innocence: a corrupter involves the heart in the toils of guilt, and dares to call this ſhameful bondage liberty.

" Are the chiefs of Iran free becauſe they ſeem not to be compelled by arbitrary power, but are led by the chain of gold to iniquity? Are my children free becauſe thou haſt not forced them from their

their aged parent, but perſuaded them to leave him helpleſs in the fangs of deſpair? Am I free because, inſtead of being obliged to ſhed the tears of love and pity upon their fate, I am forced to curſe them and myſelf?

"The wily tyger had lent the greedy ear of attention to my vehement ſpeech; and though it was probably in order to let Giamaſb know the ſentiments of his ſubjects, I interpreted it more favourably to my wiſhes; till riſing with great compoſure, he ſaid;

"Come, my brave youths; let old age rave, it is your part to act with rea-

ſon: come, and follow the refulgency of this creſted helmet!

"They aroſe, the ungrateful boys aroſe: alas! their averted faces, ſcarcely covered with a ſoft down, were already ſpread with the bluſhes of guilt. I ruſhed forward, I intwined my trembling arms round their ſlender waiſts; perhaps I ſhould have recalled them to their duty, but the barbarian, with a blow of his gauntlet felled me to the ground.

"I was recovered to life by the new warmth which a juſt fury infuſed in my blood. Reſolved to follow the tracks of my unnatural children, I flew to the gate

of

of my inclosure, but found it strongly barred against me. At this last act of inhumanity, I roared like a lioness, who, running in search of her ferocious whelps, falls into the snares of the barbarous hunter.

"When the night displayed her gloomy veil, I invited by my screams the beasts of the forest to break the slight barrier I had set against them; they answered me with horrible shrieks, but fear or compassion kept them off; and I should have died, gnawed by the tooth of perplexing misery, if pitying Heaven had not sent you to cut at once the interwoven

terwoven threads of my anxieties and of my life.

"My ſons have received the dreadful reward of guilt, and I hope the chaſtiſement of their ſeducer has preceded their own. May mine be not the next! May I not be anſwerable to the awful tribunal before which I am going to appear for this deteſtable web of crimes.

"I ſhould have reflected, that, the moſt mortal venom, if gradually inſtilled into the veins, not only loſes part of its ſtrength, but may alſo be ſuſpended in its progreſs by proper antidotes. I ſhould have left the youths, committed to my

care,

care, to be uſed by degrees to the danger of ſociety, and contented myſelf with giving them timely warning of it. But, alas! when I formed the unſucceſsful deſign of ſeparating them from the world, I only intended it as a caution againſt ſkulking vices; I had no fear that the aſylum of innocence would be invaded by open violence or barefaced corruption; for, the juſt Lohorab then reigned over Iran.

The acceſſion of Kiſhtaſb to the throne alarmed not my ſecurity: who would not have conceived the moſt flattering hope of a prince to whom the Sage Locman had imparted the counſels of wiſdom;

wiſdom; whoſe youth had come forth radiant with the pure gold of virtues from the crucible of adverſity? Oh! if my groans could reach his ear! If he could ſee the agonies into which his criminal indolence has thrown me, he would ſurely beware of involving his loyal ſubjects in ſuch a maze of horror, whenever Heaven, in his mercy, ſhall be pleaſed to reſtore him his crown; and, at leaſt, my death would be uſeful to mankind."

"They wiſh is accompliſhed," cried Kiſhtaſb, unable to contain himſelf any longer: ſee thy guilty and juſtly puniſhed ſovereign ſtretched by thy ſide on the piercing thorns of grief, and ready to

plunge

plunge with thee into the gulf of deſpair! Stop him in ſtopping thyſelf on the fatal brink; and he will ſupply the loſs of thy ſons; he will cheriſh, honour thee as a father and a benefactor!

"Yes; to thee I owe the ſalutary light which pierces the miſt of ſelf-love: I now perceive the concealed monſter in whoſe power I have ſo long remained; his true name is obſtinacy, arrogant pride only has called him firmneſs. By him I have been led, and I have perſevered in an effeminate retreat, when I was deſtined to manly labours; he has made me reject the expoſtulations of truth, reſiſt the impulſes of compaſſion, and open my heart

heart to inſinuating treachery. But, if this ſincere acknowledgment of my error ſhould empower me to atone for my faults, my firſt obligation would be to make thee all poſſible amends for thy unparelleled wrongs.

The wildneſs of aſtoniſhment had been ſtrongly impreſſed on the features of the old man during the ſpeech of Kiſhtaſb; but, at laſt, his glaring eyes ſhut themſelves, and he dropped, ſeemingly in the ſlumber of death.

As the afflicted monarch was looking around for ſome means of ſuccour, he ſaw that the diſmal ſcene had a new intruder,

truder, and found in him one of the two slaves, who formerly, by the order of Azim, had brought his ransom to the robbers, whom he had magnificently recompenced in his prosperity, but whose attachment he had neglected in the days of his general forgetfulness.

"Kezri, exclaimed he, hast thou designedly followed me to this mansion of tears; or has providence conducted hither thy steps?"

"My duty was to attend you in the path of trouble and difficulties, answered Kezri, and my first care must be to relieve

lieve your preſent diſtreſs in regard to this object of your juſt pity."

In ſaying theſe words, he approached the deplorable victim of paternal tenderneſs, and, by a reviving elixir, recalled him to the uſe of his ſenſes; then, turning to the princes, he intreated them to recruit their exhauſted ſpirits with the ſame efficacious drops, and to retire to repoſe, promiſing them to perform the office of a comforter with unwearied vigilance.

Kiſhtaſh and Zerir, having found the pillows of repentance infinitely ſofter than that of vain remorſe, aroſe on the

next

next morn with an unuſual cheerfulneſs, to which Kezri added the agreeable hope of reſtoring their venerable hoſt to life and perhaps to ſome tranquility. They repaired to the ruſtic garden, and having ſeated themſelves under a cedar tree, whoſe intwined and fragrant boughs made a natural and delicious bower, Kiſhtaſh began to ſpeak as follows;

"The reproaches which the voice of anguiſh has uttered againſt me, as well as my own confeſſion of their truth, and of their fatal ſource, have acquainted you with the hiſtory of my misfortune; now, let me know if your fall is occaſioned by ſimilar cauſes; and, by an unlimited

limited confidence, ſeek conſolation at leaſt in the tender boſom of a brother!"

At this encouraging addreſs, Zerir opened the lips of confuſion; and faithfully retraced the winding paths in which the pen of narration has already followed him; and, after having been interrupted by the tranſports of Kiſhtaſb on the fraudulent letter ſent in his name by Giamaſb, he proceeded till the event at which was ſtopped a recital made with no leſs truth than his, but with ſtronger colours than ſelf-love permitted him to employ.

"I could nor but thank Melee for his opportune advice, continued he, though

I deſpiſed the real motives of his zeal; but, as my heart panted after a man whom I truly eſteemed, I thought, with ſome comfort, that the perfidy of Periſadeh might detach Saheh from the intereſt of that enchantreſs; and, directing my firſt ſteps to his blockaded abode, I accoſted him thus;

"Behold, too blindly upright man, behold thy boaſted model of every virtue, is changed into an artful and treacherous woman, who, taking advantage of my former prepoſſeſſion for her, was trying to deafen my ear to the clang of arms by the ſoft accents of inſidious love. Zalzer advances towards Zamakhſhar at the

the head of a powerful army; his ambition, under the maſk of revenge, has been excited by the ſuppoſed patient Periſadeh, who, having deceived the credulous Sitara, had found means to draw me in the toils of her malice; and aimed at my deſtruction in the very moment that ſhe ſaw my weak heart inclined to reſume that chain which it had juſtly ſhaken off. Now call it a virtue to ſacrifice to ſuch an idol of darkneſs thy daughter, thy honour, and thy friend."

"No, my lord, anſwered the inflexible Saheb; I never will make ſuch a ſacrifice: the moſt perfect object, the ſtrongeſt paſſions, the greateſt intereſt, could

could not tempt me to it. I will ever be a tender, but unprejudiced father: I will preſerve my honour by juſt actions, and ſhew my fidelity in friendſhip, by conſtantly keeping the flambeau of truth in the ſight of my friend.

" Forgive then my preſumption, if I maintain that you are deceived in your opinion of Periſadeh. Can the dove recruit his white plumage with the black feathers of the raven? Can a pure and noble ſoul employ mean arts and criminal deception? Undoubtedly the reſtleſs voice of fame has acquainted the prince Zalzer with the wrongs of his ſiſter; and his excuſable thirſt of revenge is the only

ſoundation on which the unfortunate princeſs is accuſed; while, perhaps, in this inſtant ſhe witholds the arm of her irritated brother.

"But let us not loſe the precious hours in vain ſurmiſes, when impending danger calls for activity. Shall you expoſe your unprepared ſubjects to ſlaughter or captivity by refuſing to act as juſtice commands? Shall you wait in your beſieged metropolis for a new favour from Heaven which you offend by your perjury? Oh! let not the man, who has reſigned for you the bleſſed bowers of quietneſs, ſee thoſe unhappy days! Let not his ears, ſo long uſed to the harmony

mony of innocent concord, be pierced by the tremendous ſounds of the imprecations which would be made againſt your iniquity! Do not doom his heart to ſupport a moſt dreadful conflict between his tenderneſs for you and his natural bent to righteouſneſs!

"I can cheerfully offer you the ſacrifice of my life; but I cannot cut off the lives of others with the ſword of injuſtice. Let me then, I beſeech you on my knees, let me perform the obligations which I have willingly impoſed upon me, as our common honour and peace require! Let me fly to the camp of Zalzer, and, by a happy mediation, calm this ruffled

ocean of ſtrife, in making you poſſeſſor of all the perfection which nature can reunite in a woman; then your felicity ſhall be the due and dear reward of my zeal!'

"Can I deſcribe, my deareſt brother, the impreſſion which the affecting words, the ſupplicating poſture, and the tender tears of Saheb made upon me? I raiſed him to my breaſt; I ſeemed to reſpire a purer air in his embraces; I thought that the perfume of his virtues diffuſed its enlivening fragrancy to my heart; when Zulica burſting into the room, rouzed me from this happy trance, and recalled me

me to the tranſports of an indiſcreet paſſion.

" Save me, my beloved lord, exclaimed ſhe, throwing herſelf at my feet, ſave me from the tyrannical Gulrouz, who aſſures me that in a few moments I ſhall be united to Elich, becauſe you are forced to ſubmit to Zalzer, and to receive from his threatening hand his injured ſiſter. I do not claim your promiſe: no, Heaven forbid that you ſhould deſcend from your throne for the unfortunate Zulica: but, why am I doomed to give my affection to another becauſe the glory of being queen of Kharezm is not to be my lot? Have I not affirmed

that my heart ſhall be for ever yours when, alas! you made the ſame oath on my trembling lips? Why ſhould I not, at leaſt, be granted a laſt and mournful farewell?'

"Oh! we ſhall not part thus! exclaimed I, preſſing the amiable and innocent maid againſt my heart: let Gulrouz, Zalzer, and Periſadeh rage at our love; nothing——.'

"Hold, raſh prince, interrupted Saheb, tearing his daughter from my arms with a tranſport ill becoming his duty and wiſdom; hold, and let not thy ſhameleſs tongue teſtify the guilty relapſe of thy fickle

fickle mind. And thou, audacious girl, continued he, thruſting off with the hand of rudeneſs her delicate and trembling frame, retire; and do not force me to curſe thy ſimplicity, which proves more deſtructive than the moſt refined malice.'

" At this harſh treatment, Zulica recoiled with terror, and ſought a refuge in the tender boſom of her mother, who had followed her ſteps; whilſt the fire of my anger, having deſtroyed the leaſt traces of the ſentiments which Saheb had before excited, I turned to him with a furious look, ſaying;

" Thy head, traitor, ſhall anſwer me for this ineſtimable treaſure, which I leave in thy hands till I have inſured its poſſeſſion to my love, by repulſing the bold invader at whoſe name thy ſoul ſhrinks with fear. Remain, coward, within thy walls, which I promiſe to ſecure with the ſtrongeſt guard: it ſhall not be long before I make thee confeſs that the ſon of Lohoraſb wanted not thy inſignificant help when he vouchſafed to look down on thy littleneſs.'

" I ſee, my beloved Kiſhtaſb, that you are bewildered in amazement at the ſudden changes of my ſoul: they are inconceivable even to me, and I ſhudder with

with horror at the odious remembrance. Yes, the reſtleſs waves of a raging ſea, the impetuouſneſs of a whirlwind ſweeping away the daring rocks which oppoſe its fury, are weak images of my thoughts and of my actions in that critical time: I burnt with reſentment againſt Saheb, and with love for Zulica. Indignation boiled in my veins; when I ſurveyed the inſolent enemy who beſieged my walls, the dejected looks of my ſubjects melted my heart with compaſſion.

" As, however, nothing but a deſperate defence could ſave us, I ceaſed not by my exhortations and my example to animate the few warriors who happened

to be in the city. We ſallied night and day from our aſſailed gates; and like a ſmall, but ſelect troop of lions, ruſhed on this innumerable herd of vile beaſts, and never returned without having proved, that multitude cannot contend with valour: not that Zalzer is a deſpicable adverſary, but his army of banditti ſeconded not his courage.

"Fate had decreed that I ſhould be overthrown by a more formidable enemy, whoſe fury I had never attempted to daunt, and who having ſtudded my throne with the nails of troubles, at length hurled me from it into the duſt. This hoſtile power was my paſſionate temper;

and

and his laſt atchievement will make you tremble and forget your own remorſe in your reflections on my guilt, to which your faults cannot be compared.

" The ſiege had laſted a moon, and our brave reſiſtance had forced the ardour of the beſiegers to decline with this inconſtant luminary; when one day, fatigue having delivered me up to ſlighted ſleep, I was rouzed from my repoſe by the baſely officious Melec, who thundered in my ear;

" Riſe, my lord! your peace is for ever loſt if you delay a moment! In the tumult of the laſt attack, the priſon

of Elich has been forced; and, at the head of his rebellious refcuers, he has made his way through your guards to the palace of Saheb, by whofe orders he has been inftantly united to Zulica!'

"Dareft thou come to me with thefe horrible tidings, and without the heads of the two traitors in thy hand! cried, I, with a voice almoft choaked by rage. Doft thou expect that I fhould fully my arms with their bafe blood, which will be too much honoured when even fpilled by thee? Fly from my eyes, and never preſume to breathe in my preſence till thou throweſt at my feet theſe deteſtable proofs of thy duty.

"The

"The vile man obeyed with the perfidious zeal of malice, and left me in such exquisite tortures of the mind that no tongue can express them. I was on flame at the offence; I quivered with the cold of death at my expected revenge: every instant seemed to bring to my ear the horrid sound of Melec's exulting voice, to offer to my sight the pale and bloody head of Saheb with eyes yet armed with a thousand shafts of just reproaches: then I advanced with hasty steps to retract my cruel command, but suddenly recoiled at the odious image of Zulica in the arms of Elich.

"This

"This delirium having at length exhauſted my ſpirits, I reclined on a ſopha, and covering my face with my mantle, remained like a man on the rack, who, though ſtruggling for life, is forced, by his inſupportable pains, to wiſh for his diſſolution, and waſte his failing ſtrength in theſe two oppoſite ſentiments.

"I know not how long I groaned in this dreadful agony, from which I was recovered by the preſſure of a cold and trembling hand. I ſtarted at the touch as if it had been the ſting of a deadly viper; and the ſhades of approaching night adding to the darkneſs in which my ſenſes were involved, I thought I ſaw

Melec

Melec dropping with the innocent blood, and glaring at me with the affrighted look of a baſe murderer.

"Monſter, cried I, haſt thou performed the horrible deed! Then plunge thy thirſty ſword into my guilty heart, or receive thy juſt reward!

"Saying this, I aroſe in a phrenzy, and was ſearching for my ſcymitar, when a voice as gentle as the vernal gales, exclaimed;

"O, my lord! you need not your dreaded weapon to convey death to the heart of your faithful Sitara; her grief at

at your ſituation will better effect this purpoſe! But, let me ſave your dear life before I ſink under the weight of my affliction! Fly in this moment, while the warriors, whom Periſadeh has made your defenders, keep your palace from inſult; while her tender importunities detain the ſteps of her irritated brother; and while your revolted ſubjects, who have opened your gates to Zalzer, flock to the manſion of your vizir----.'

" To behold, to curſe my cruelty, cried I;---thither I will repair to offer them an expiatory victim, to be pierced by a thouſand daggers on the corſe of the juſt man!

" Saheb

" Saheb lives; replied Sitara; the attempt of Melec, which has cauſed this inſurrection, has been attended with its due ſucceſs: Gulrouz herſelf has ſtabbed his impious heart, without conſidering that a baſe man deſerved not to die by the hand of a generous woman.'

" Why then ſhould I fly? returned I: ſince my crime has not been conſummated, I can ſtill defend myſelf with an undaunted courage, or die honourably: I may recall the hearts of my ſubjects; oh! I may yet deliver the unfortunate Zulica from the hands of the abhorred Elich!

" You

" You muſt then haſte, reſumed Sitara, to the ſide of your garden which the Gihon waters, and where a boat is provided for your ſafety; for Zulica has already taken that road with Elich. But, if you deſire ever to meet again with that fatal beauty, croſs immediately the river, and avoid, with the utmoſt caution, the new hatred that the Turanians have ſworn to your royal family. Alas! where can I direct your ſteps that they may not be ſurrounded with enemies, when your obdurate heart rejects the only powerful and ſincere friend who could appeaſe this ſtorm of misfortune!'

" Do

" Do not give that ſacred name to the perfidious Periſadeh, anſwered I: thou art my only friend; if life is a gift for me, I owe it to thee alone. Forgive an involuntary paſſion which thy charms and goodneſs only could have rendered unjuſt; and receive, in this tender embrace, the aſſurance of an eternal gratitude!

" In ſaying this, I tore myſelf from the ſoft chain with which the arms of Sitara encircled me; and being driven by frantic love, I turned the heels of ſhame to glory and duty. As I was haſtily traverſing my deſerted palace, I heard the city reſound with confuſed acclamations

of

of, *Long live our king Zalzer, and his Vizir, the excellent Saheb!*

" Struck by the odious ſounds, I remained awhile ſuſpended between the impulſes of my juſt rage and thoſe of my blind paſſion, which at laſt turned to its own advantage the new blow that ſhould have cruſhed it. Oh! ſaid I to myſelf, ſince Saheb has given his ſanction to the uſurpation of my throne, has returned offence for offence, crime for crime, my former obligations are cancelled, and my remorſe deſtroyed! I can now without any ſcruples ſatiate the thirſt of my revenge in the blood of Elich, and feed the

the hunger of my love in the arms of Zulica!

"With the baſe comfort of theſe thoughts, I ordered the watermen to land on the part of the Turanian ſhore where the laſt departing veſſels had landed. If you mean, replied one of them, the boat which hath ſecured the daughter of our good Vizir and her huſband from the turbulence of our paſſionate king, it hath not croſſed the river, but followed this border, as if the pretty fugitives intended to take ſhelter in Iran: thither you may join them; and as we are generouſly paid to obey you, we are

ready

ready to take any road according to your direction.'

" This discovery made me swallow, without reluctance, the bitter draught of their rustic sincerity: I was pleased to be unknown to them; and having given them my orders, I sat on their rough benches with more content than I had ever experienced on my purple couches; and thus reasoned with myself;

" I was not born for royalty: my heart wants not its pageantry; nor ought to be oppressed with foreign cares, when it has in its exquisite sensibility an inexhaustible source of enjoyments. Let

Zalzer

Zalzer wield the heavy wand of dominion with the added burthen of injuſtice: let Periſadeh deck her revengeful brow with a crown whoſe brightneſs ſhall not diſpel the cloud of ſhame in which its acquiſition involves her: let Saheb toil to ſet between right and wrong the very bounds which he muſt be conſcious he has himſelf overleaped. As to me, I am contented with revelling in the delicious bowers of love, where my arm will ſuſtain no weight but that of my reclining beloved; where my temples will be ſurrounded only with a lively wreath of unthorny roſes, unfading myrtles, and candid jeſſamin; where I will breathe the pure air of calm innocence and unallayed

pleaſure,

pleaſure, without any fear of having it corrupted by the malignant exhalations of guilt and remorſe, perplexities and diſappointments. Yes; if Elich were another Ruſtem in ſtrength and valour, he could not contend with me for the poſſeſſion of Zulica; I ſhall get the noble prize, which is my due as a free gift of love; and my brother, whoſe tenderneſs will be awakened by my preſence, will undoubtedly grant me ſome receſs in his vaſt dominions to realize my enchanting dream!

" With theſe agreeable fancies, I ſhortened the long hours of night; and fearing that the ſwift oars of the rowers

ſhould

would overſhoot the mark of my purſuit, I landed in the morning, and having advanced towards a village, aſked the firſt man I met if he could afford ſome refreſhment to a wearied traveller. My requeſt was cheerfully granted; and as in the familiarity of converſation I turned my diſcourſe on the ſcent of enquiry, and firſt demanded if the glory of Kiſhtaſb now ſhone in Khoraſſan or in Pars, my hoſt, looking ſtedfaſtly at me, anſwered;

"Young man, I truſt the ſerenity of thy countenance, better than the badge of honour thou weareſt, for the ſincerity of thy intentions; as often a noble mail has covered a baſe heart, and calmneſs

has never concealed a dishonest design. But, whence comest thou to be ignorant that the pleasing groves of Istakhar, and the lofty towers of Herat, are in the power of an usurper? That Kishtasb, by neglecting his duty towards his people, has lost his crown, which the perfidious Giamasb has bought with the price of iniquity? Is the mighty empire of Iran of so little consequence to fame that she should not relate to the whole world its heavy misfortunes and its strange revolution? However, thou art not the first who has occasioned this humiliating reflection, for a nobleman of Kharezm, who last night reposed with his consort under my peaceful roof, has been as

surprised, though not so much affected, as thou, by these unhappy tidings.'

"The speaking tears of my dumb grief, better than words, having assured the loyal Iranian that his secret sentiments were deposited in the bosom of fidelity, I took a thankful leave of him; and, being intoxicated with this last draught of affliction, wandered in the wood without any recollection of my former design.

"To my ideal prospect of happiness, had succeeded the gloomy sight of my real misery, which my having lost the means of succouring you had presented

in its full view. The treachery and perverseness of Giamasb recalled to my remembrance every proof of sincere attachment and virtuous zeal that Saheb had given me; and his last fault, on which I had triumphed, became the keenest sting of self-reproach.

"Absorbed in these thoughts, I entered the valley where you met me, and resumed my wonted fury at the sight of Elich, whom I immediately attacked.—But you have seen our combat; to you I owe its happy issue: I must only add, that from the moment I forgave my wrongs and resigned my love, such a revolution has been made in my sentiments

that I hardly know myself; which I cannot attribute to my disappointment at your misfortune, since, in the midst of my efforts to acquire Zulica, I had formed the design to conduct her to my father, as to a safe asylum; and, as I was in hopes to find you there, thought I should be reunited to all the objects I hold dear in the world.

"O my generous, my beloved brother, exclaimed Kishtasb, must I interweave the funeral cypress to the triumphant palm which your noble victory over your passions has deserved? Yes; help me to support this too heavy load of sorrow, and know that our just and good

father has paid with his life his prepoſſeſſion for me. Alas! if he had kept the reins of empire in his wife hands, the impious Argialb, who has violated his ſacred retirement, would have trembled at the ſhadow of a throne, which I have left a prey to the friend of every kind of cruelty, to the inſtigator of every ſort of perfidiouſneſs; while I vainly bemoan my having ſhamefully betrayed the honourable truſt!"

A long ſilence enſued between the two unfortunate princes, who in a cloſe embrace, having reclined their heads on the ſame turf, were mingling their tears which flowed for their venerable parent

with

with an entire forgetfulneſs of their own fate, when Kezri interrupted this mournful ſcene, by telling them that their hoſt earneſtly requeſted their preſence.

The reanimated eyes of the old man beamed with loyalty and reverence at the ſight of Kiſhtaſh, whom he thus addreſſed:

"Although I deſire to live, my lord, not only to obey your command, but alſo in hope to ſee the ſun of your glory ſhine forth with new refulgence, when the rays of your virtues ſhall have diſpelled the clouds of adverſity; as death is a wary and ſubtle beſieger who knows

a thouſand ways to ſurpriſe the fortreſs of life, not a moment is to be loſt which can be employed in diſcharging our duty.

"As ſome time paſt I was repairing my decayed dwelling, I found an immenſe treaſure of gold and precious ſtones depoſited by the hand of avarice or caution in the boſom of its parent earth. The receptacle of theſe innumerable riches is a large cave, which may ſhelter your ſacred perſon in caſe of ſome unſuſpected alarm; and its contents may not only help you to reaſcend your throne, but even to redreſs the many wrongs which your ſubjects have ſuſ-

tained.

tained. Heaven grant, that this preſent of fortune, which I truly deſpiſed, and whoſe pernicious value I took care to diſguiſe to my unhappy ſons, may become a ſource of real good in the hand of my ſovereign, who has an undoubted right to it.

"I have concealed the entrance of this ſubterranean place with ſo much art, that even my children, whoſe indiſcretion is, alas! too well ſecured, and who were preſent at the diſcovery, could not ſince find it. Kezri, to whom I have imparted my ſecret, can direct your ſteps: be not ſurpriſed that I have repoſed ſo great a truſt in him; my eſteem

for this worthy man is of a long date, for I saw him in his youth at the palace of Locman."

These last words having thrown Kezri in some confusion, he endeavoured to turn the attention of the princes from them, by proposing to visit the cave instantly; to which they consented, more to comply with the prayers of their generous host, than by a curiosity or covetousness incompatible with their afflicted and noble souls.

They were, however, surprised at the dazzling sight of pyramids of gems and hills of gold which the spacious vault contained;

contained; and having concluded that they muſt have been the property of ſome great monarch of the paſt ages, were retiring, when Kiſhtaſb, having haply thrown his eyes upon an inſcription on marble, exclaimed;

"Here the finger of deſtiny has written the decree of my fate! Here lies the moſt glorious Gemſhid, who diſappeared from the world, with his immenſe treaſure, when the perfidious Zohac uſurped his crown! Here the undeſerving Kiſhtaſb has found his laſt aſylum in the noble company of a monarch to whom he may be compared in misfortune, though, alas! not in virtues!"

"Ceaſe, oh! ceaſe theſe ominous remarks; cried Zemir; and when this ſtrange event foretels you the moſt happy return of fortune, do not blacken the luminous character with the ink of ungrateful deſpair!

"Shall powerful gold be unable to heal the wounds that it has made to honour and fidelity? Shall Giamaſb contend with us when his means of corruption ſhall be applied to recall the Iranians to their duty? No; I will not accuſe mankind of ſuch a perverſity, but upon conviction; and I fly to make the experiment!"

The

The prudent counsels of the old man, the reports of Kezri, who often repaired to the adjacent villages, and the tender entreaties of Kilitasb, restrained for a while the laudable ardour of Zerir for the restoration of his brother; but at length, the importunities of his zeal prevailed. As he was unknown to the Iranians even more than their dethroned and so long inaccessible monarch, as he had been forgotten in the bloody proscription of Giamasb, it was agreed, that he should try the supposed irresistible eloquence of gold with the neighbouring villagers and with the warriors who guarded the frontier, on condition that he should immediately

immediately return with the news of his ſucceſs.

Elated with the moſt ſanguine hopes, Zerir felt not the pangs of ſeparation as his unfortunate brother did; but was ſoon more depreſſed than he at finding, that his magnificent offers were contemned for the enjoyment of that general diſſoluteneſs at which an uſurper muſt connive if he will inſure the hearts he has corrupted; that, though the Iranians deſpiſed Giamaſb, they recoiled at the name of their lawful ſovereign, being more terrified with the idea of order which it recalled to their minds, than by the

the oppreſſion they had ſuffered under its ſway.

The indignant prince was treading back the gloomy path of diſappointment, and had purpoſely deviated from the road which conducted to the ruſtic habitation, to avoid the danger of being followed, when he ſpied a pleaſing grove planted by the ſkilful hand of nature. Oppreſſed by the heat of noon, as well as by his heavy thoughts, he haſtened to the cooling ſhades, where he found a rich pavilion pitched on the border of a clear rivulet, and committed to the care of two beautiful dogs by idle attendants, who ſlept around on the graſs, relying on the watchfulneſs

watchfulness of their pretended irrational protectors.

When, with surprise, he there saw two slaves whom he had given to Sitara, and who had attended her in her retreat from his court; when on this he was indulging an agreeable surmise; the four-footed guardians, who had viewed him with the eyes of attention, preferring an ancient friendship to their present trust, suddenly quitted their post to welcome him with their natural fondness.

The fidelity of an animal so little imitated and so often disregarded by men presented to the mind of Zeris a too ob-

vious

vious comparison, and excited in his heart those sentiments of tenderness and gratitude so pure and just when rightly applied to these innocent and serviceable beings, whose merit and understanding cannot be called in question but by the idiotism of prejudice and the cruelty of pride.

As the two lovely beasts had been his favourites whom he had resigned to the princess of Dilemi, their presence, and their seeming invitation, confirmed him in the hope of being near his amiable friend. He entered the pavilion, and advanced towards a large couch, which was surrounded by a purple curtain, with

the

the trembling and cautious steps of doubtful expectation: but no sooner had he discovered by the side of Sitara a ravishing fair, who, as well as her companion, enjoyed the sweet of repose, than his soul, acknowledging the first power to which it had submitted, almost forsook its wonted charge to fly to the beloved object.

The sun of beauty, from whose radiance he had so obstinately turned the head of contempt, darted through his eager looks, the unquenchable flame of love into his heart, and annihilated these weak and fleeting sparks which the impetuosity of his temper had blown up to

his

his ruin. He had kneeled down in an extaſy which excluded painful remembrance and anxious fear, when a hand, whoſe dazzling whiteneſs and graceful motion were not ſo unknown to him as the beautiful body to which it belonged, haply touched his lips and threw him into an irreſiſtible tranſport, at which Periſadeh awakened.

The ſerene ſky of her azure eyes was ſuddenly clouded at the ſight of Zerir, and their ſofteſt rays changed into the lightning of anger; and from her melodious voice, now altered by a violent and unuſual guſt of paſſion, burſt the thunderbolt of theſe words;

" Fly

Fly from the presence of the injured Perisadeh, audacious traitor, or see this avenging dagger free her too meanly faithful heart from thy too long borne and now insupportable insults."

As in saying this, the furious princess had turned the point of her threatening steel against her breast, Zerir stepped back with a terror that supported his strength to the entrance of the pavilion, and there fell senseless between the two dogs, who, by their piteous howlings, seemed to implore for him a friendly assistance.

Sinara

Sitara flew at their cries, and her inſinuating tenderneſs having had its wonted efficacy, ſaid:

Retire, moſt unhappy prince, if, at laſt, you value the life of Periſadeh, and the peace of Sitara, who has made for you a ſacrifice at which her weak ſoul ſhudders! Why have you not repaired to Turan as I adviſed, well knowing the dangers which awaited you in theſe countries ſubmitted to a perfidious tyrant who has ſworn to ſpill the laſt drop of your precious blood? Surely you have not aſcribed to a mean jealouſy my taking advantage of your phrenzy for Zulica, to provide for your ſafety, by directing you

you on a false track! Heaven forbid that you should have admitted such injurious thoughts while I was giving the last stab to my repose on the altar of generous love!"

"Oh! never, never, cried Zerir, have I doubted of the greatness of thy soul: thy exalted sentiments are the only plank left to me in this horrible shipwreck which I too well deserve; thou only canst save me from this abyss of despair in which the just wrath of the divine Perisadeh has plunged me; or, at least, obtain me the favour of dying at her feet in----."

"Hark!

"Hark! interrupted Sitara; hearest thou not the advancing steps of yonder steeds, which threaten the loss of my honour---of thy life! Retire---return to thy kingdom!----Zalzer!---oh! avoid him----I will try to appeaſe Periſadeh:---let us part, in this inſtant, for ever---for ever! moſt horrible word! can I pronounce it and live!"

Zerir, confounded at the incoherent exclamations of Sitara, but ſeeing in her affrighted looks the reality of the danger which ſhe denounced, ſubmitted to her will, being overcome by gratitude, or rather already inured to a virtue too long baniſhed from his impetuous ſoul.

Kiſhtaſh

Kiſhtaſb was more afflicted at the new misfortune which had befallen his brother than at the entire deſtruction of his own hopes; and endeavoured to comfort him thus;

"It is well known, my deareſt friend, that the ſtorms of love are always ſucceeded by the cleareſt ſky; why then ſhould you not indulge that thought inſtead of applying to the tranſient anger of Periſadeh the idea of perpetuity which the laſt deſpairing expreſſion of Sitara has impreſſed on your mind? Oh! forget that dreadful word *for ever* which muſt anguiſh the ſoul in proportion of its incapacity to conceive infinity, or the diſmal

diſmal ſound ſhall convey to my heart the contagion of trouble which has gained poſſeſſion of yours!

"Though I never have opened the lips of complaint on a grief more piercing than the ſharpeſt arrows of fortune, yet my amiable Kenayoum is alway's preſent to my thoughts. It is an error to believe that an unſatisfied paſſion is ſtronger than an affection cemented by mutual endearments. No; a tender intercourſe of five years has too well made me experience that paſt pleaſures bring every minute to the mind a thouſand remembrances which imbitter and conſume life with the ſlow poiſon of regret. Philoſophy cannot ſtop

the venom in its progreſs: nothing but the phrenzy of wild enthuſiaſm, which deſtroys to the root the amiable plant of humanity, can make a heart inſenſible to its loſt happineſs; can deprive it of its right to be more pitied, for feeling a perpetual privation with a ſenſibility unknown to thoſe who never have attained the end of their deſires."

Zerir, ſurpriſed at the unuſual vehemence of his brother, replied with a ſigh;

"As I have unfortunately touched a ſtring which could untune our harmony, let us wave the topic, or rather reſume it

it in a way, which will ſtrengthen our wonted union. I ſee that we may add to our load of affliction in endeavouring to conſole each other; let us then join together in ſorrow, as we are joined in friendſhip: let us raiſe a temple to deſpair, the materials of which ſhall be the diſmal cypreſs, the ſad yew, and the ominous roſemary; and where we ſhall repeat the fatal words *for ever*, without diſputing, but with tears, who better feels its energy."

Kiſhtaſb agreed to the propoſal, which was put into immediate execution with an eagerneſs ſuitable to an age whoſe ardour muſt feed upon ſome object. The old

man and Kezri indulged the mournful fancy as the beſt means to ſupport the unhappy monarchs under the oppreſſion of fortune; well knowing that natural ſentiments are a ſhield againſt artificial paſſions, and that even unſucceſsful love has charms ſufficient to make forget the ſeducing but empty pride of grandeur. The trees, which had been taught to bend their rough boughs in order to form this ſanctuary of grief, had increaſed their gloomy ſhades during the revolution of a year; the birds, who inhabited them, had learned to repeat, "Zerir, has *for ever* loſt the divine Periſadeh; Kiſhtaſb is *for ever* ſeparated from the lovely Kenayoum; but both ſhall *for ever* unite

unite in repentance and brotherly love;' when the melancholy concert was interrupted by the venerable Azim, who being introduced to the princes by Kezri, thus addreſſed them:

"Leave this abode of diſtreſs, my lords, and follow me to the manſion of comfort. The Sage Locman invites you to the next opening of the labyrinth: his protection will inſure your ſafety in the courſe of this long journey, the conduct of which is committed to my care. Haſte to put the foot of alacrity in the path of hope, for the trial of your hearts having been made, its ſucceſs has opened to you the gate of mercy."

The princes having teſtified their gratitude towards Locman and their acquieſcence in his will, affectionately welcomed Azim; and on the next morn quitted, with involuntary tears, their dear, though mournful retreat, after having bidden a tender farewell to their generous hoſt, whoſe life they intruſted to the care of Kezri.

The prudent Azim, who had a retinue ſufficient to repel inſult in any common occurences, but apparently unable to reſiſt a powerful attack, obliged the royal travellers to take the unfrequented roads, and to advance with ſlow progreſs; which precautions their confi-

dence

dence in Locman would have rejected, if they had not feared to incur his disgrace by disobeying their guide.

Thus they arrived not at the labyrinth till the fatal day, and were immediately admitted to the trial, without the usual examination.

Perplexities and fears attended their steps through the alleys which they had formerly trodden with carelessness, and their agitation redoubled at the new windings which they were obliged to explore. With trembling hands they gathered the flowers, and with anxious looks searched the decrees of fate in the eyes of Loc-

man, who having diſpatched the crowd of ſtrangers, and bidden his attendants to retire, addreſſed them thus;

"Welcome, princes, thrice welcome to the ſervant of Him who has, in his mercy, forgiven you your faults, reſtored your hearts to virtue, and bleſſed the watchful cares with which I have attended your ſteps through the maze of difficulties which I had been enabled to foreſee.

"Liſten now to my ſalutary remonſtrances, and let the recollection of a dearly-bought experience impreſs them on your minds with everlaſting characters: but, leſt the rehearſal of your errors

rors ſhould offend your ears, and miſlead your judgment on my abilities, know the means which I have employed to be inſtructed of your actions, and the right I have acquired to your forbearance and docility.

"From the time in which you firſt requeſted my protection with the voice of innocence, and left my palace with the giddineſs of youth, my attendants have followed your traces. If I could not interfere with your free will, at leaſt I expoſed to your view the beſt determination you could take. If I was not permitted to ſave you from the misfortunes that your inconſiderate conduct occa-

ſioned, I endeavoured to alleviate them. I ſent Saheb to the aſſiſtance of Zerir; by my orders Kezri never loſt the ſight of Kiſhtaſb. Yes, prince, it was Kezri that apprized Azim of your captivity, and enabled him to redeem you. He inſtructed the good Afraſiab of your wiſh, and of my deſire to accompliſh it in the perſon of Kenayoum, who was purpoſely ſent to the woods of Kharezm, in order to unite your hearts before your hands were joined, and to inſure, by ſo tender an alliance, a permanent peace between the two rival nations.

" The faithful Kezri was witneſs of your valour when you delivered Turan from

from the two devouring monſters. He trembled at the danger to which you expoſed yourſelf in challenging your impetuous brother againſt the repreſentations of Azim and Saheb. His mournful eyes were long fixed on the walls of your inacceſſible palace; and with the ſwiftneſs of true affection he flew on your tracks to the cottage whither Providence had conducted you.

"He ſent to me the welcome news that you had made the fatal acknowledgment on which depended the change of your heart and of your fortune; and I have kept my promiſe of ſeeing you again in this palace, in order to be aſ-

ſured, by a new trial, of your diſpoſitions, and the counſels they required. Theſe I am ready to give you, after having entirely explored the abyſs of evils into which you have been plunged by your obſtinacy.

"The moſt dreadful has been the treachery of Argiaſb, who was exaſperated when you accepted his part of Kharezm againſt the advice of Guderz. Next, is the perſecution which your brother has ſuſtained from the banditti whom you imprudently recompenſed, againſt the objections of Azim. As to your own overthrow, which has been preceeded by a ſeries of calamities inflicted on your

ſubjects,

ſubjects, you well know that it has been cauſed by your voluntary blindneſs in placing your confidence in a man who, by his vices, had been excluded from a throne on which the virtues of your father had exalted you.

"But, if ſo many diſaſters have certainly flowed from the odious ſource which was ſo long unknown to you, it is no leſs true that every one of your good actions has produced a favourable event. Your magnanimity in delivering your enemies from their voracious deſtructors enabled you to reſcue yourſelf from impending danger. Your generoſity towards the two princes to whom you relinquiſhed

linquiſhed the trophies of your valour, has not only inſured a ſafe retreat to your conſort, but alſo procured your reſtoration; for Firzana, who has ſucceeded to the vile and perfidious Argiaſb, and owes you his crown, has ſhewn his gratitude, by ſending a powerful army into Iran under the command of Saheb, who preſerving, as general, the advantage he had upon Giamaſb, as vizir, having totally defeated him, has replaced Kenayoum on your throne, and, by wiſe regulations, paved your way to the hearts of your ſubjects. Laſtly, your humanity towards your afflicted hoſt, has ſecured you againſt the reſources with which active

tive malice furniſh a traitor, in the following manner.

"The cruel ſeducer of the old man's children, who in a private quarrel had been dangerouſly wounded, and in that ſituation robbed of his armour by the ill-inclined youths, had been apprized by them of the treaſure diſcovered by their father. As he was long detained on the bed of languor, the important ſecret reached not the ear of the uſurper till after his defeat. To ſuch hopeful aſylum Giamaſb and Zoroaſter flew under the conduct of their infernal agent, and were with him entrapped in the ſubterranean

cave,

cave, by the wary old man and the vigilant Kezri.

"There, gnawed by the fangs of famine, in the midſt of the ſhining matter from which they had extracted their mortal venom, theſe bloody vipers have turned their deadly ſtings againſt each other, and, by horrid ſtruggles, endeavoured to add ſome few excruciating moments to their deteſtable lives: terrible, and yet too mild puniſhment for their innumerable iniquities!

"Return then to Herat, where the virtuous Kenayoum waits for your preſence with the impatience of love, and beguile

beguile the tedious hours by teaching her innocent infant, who is unconſcious of the injury you intended him, to receive you with open arms. And if your paſt misfortunes have been a dreadful inſtruction to monarchs who take their vicious obſtinacy for a generous firmneſs, let your future conduct teach them alſo that, if the acknowledging of an error, ſo painful to narrow underſtandings, proves the greatneſs of the mind, it likewiſe announces its capacity for repairing the evil conſequences of it.

"But, above all, employ your utmoſt vigilance to ſtop the contagion of the idolatrous ſuperſtition, which you have

ſuffered

ſuffered to ſpread in your empire: this is a crime for which you cannot atone, but by directing your ſubjects to the pure and ſimple worſhip of their anceſtors, and by repulſing every preacher of a new doctrine with theſe words: *It is the duty of every man to juſtify his actions to his Creator; and not to juſtify the ways of his Creator to men.*

"As to you, prince Zerir, whoſe faults have not been of ſo black a dye, your ſenſibility muſt finiſh your puniſhment. Know then, that your excellent Vizir, whoſe life you have attempted in your habitual phrenzy, whoſe fidelity you have accuſed on the tumultuous tranſ-

ports

ports of an incenſed populace, has, a ſecond time, redeemed a crown which your folly had forfeited; that, with the powerful eloquence of virtue, he ſoon recalled your ſubjects to their duty, and cooled the revenge of your juſtly incenſed enemy: that, at laſt, he perſuaded the generous Sitara to be the price of peace, by accepting the hand of the enamoured Zalzer, who now enjoys, in his union with this virtuous and lovely princeſs, a felicity which he wiſely preferred to joyleſs ambition.

"Know alſo, that moderation being the virtue you was in need of, you have inſured its poſſeſſion to your heart, by

nobly

nobly and ſpontaneouſly exerciſing it towards the amiable couple, whoſe bleſſings on you have obtained the accompliſhment of your moſt ardent deſire.

"Periſadeh is in my palace: reſume your wonted impetuoſity to fly in ſearch of the raviſhing object of your now well-eſtabliſhed love: bring her to me appeaſed, and conſenting to your happineſs, and I will joyfully relinquiſh the office of a rigid cenſor for the employment of a tender father."

"O thou, exclaimed Zerir, whom we cannot but take for a ſupernatural being, notwithſtanding the efforts of thy modeſty

modeſty to perſuade us the contrary; what tribute of gratitude, of duty, can we pay to thee, proportionable to our obligation and thy infinite goodneſs! But I leave my brother to expreſs, if poſſible, the ſentiments of his heart and mine, and fly, as thou ordereſt, to obtain the moſt precious gift of Heaven and thee."

Periſadeh had been invited to the labyrinth as well as the prince, but diſpenſed with the trial by the Sage, who clearly read in her angelic face the truth and purity of her heart; and who had revived her languiſhing ſoul by the gales of hope. She had fixed her abode in one of the many receſſes which the palace

lace of Locman afforded to contemplative retirement, and there expected, with the anxiety of love, the iſſue of the fatal examination; when ſome beautiful boys, who daily preſented to her the ſweet offerings of their innocent zeal, introduced Zerir.

On his knees, the enamoured prince implored a forgiveneſs which was long before granted: his lips had reſigned their wonted charge to his expreſſive eyes, whoſe eloquence, Periſadeh, unable to reſiſt, anſwered;

"Do not, prince, raiſe the bluſhes of confuſion on my cheeks by a too lively repentance;

repentance; for I am conſcious of deſerving myſelf the reproaches due to impetuous paſſions. I am not, however, without excuſe; ſince my unbecoming tranſports at our laſt interview were a fatality on which depended our common happineſs. Patience, as Locman has remarked, is a virtue, whoſe exceſs dooms my ſex to contempt, as the want of moderation, devotes a man to errors.

" But your preſence here, proclaims to me, that the time of our probation is at an end: riſe, my lord; let us go to the Sage; if his decrees, to which I ſhall unreluctantly ſubmit, anſwer my expecta-

tion,

tion, the remembrance of our faults will be ſoon eraſed by a reciprocal eſteem."

The ſweet modeſty of Periſadeh tranſported Zerir even more than her beauty; in an extatic ſilence he ſeized her proferred hand, the poſſeſſion of which Locman inſured for ever to his love.

Thus fortune ſuffered, for once, that ſenſibility ſhould be crowned with the wreath of happineſs, that conſtancy ſhould obtain a deſerved felicity, to prove, by the example of Periſadeh, that nothing is impoſſible to virtue.

The

The uſual pomp with which the feſtival of the labyrinth was celebrated, diſturbed not the extaſy of the two happy lovers: their hearts, concentred in themſelves and filled with inexpreſſible ſentiments, admitted no intruders but the beams of true affection which the aſpect of Locman conveyed, and the ſparks of joy which darted from the eyes of Kiſhtaſb.

As on the next morn they aroſe from the bower of delight, Locman, attended by the monarch of Iran, conducted them to the alley of the labyrinth in which were placed the ſtatues of thoſe who had diſtinguiſhed themſelves on the trial.

There Periſadeh and the two princes ſaw themſelves repreſented to the life

by so skilful a hand, that Zerir exclaimed,

"O surely this is the work of Genii! No mortal could have attained to such perfection!"

"The name of Genii, answered Locman, is rightly applied to those who excel in some art, and shall be henceforth given to them even by the envious multitude, who, in pretending to contemn their glory, and insulting their labours, shall pay them this homage.

"But whence comes it that man in general, so proud of a few trifling advantages which he has over the brute creation, overvalues so much the beings above

above his own ſphere that he dares not endeavour to reach their eminence? It is certainly no diſtruſt of his own abilities, but a ſupineneſs, which, as it ſpreads itſelf, involves the world in ignorance for ages after ages.

"To this muſt be aſcribed the pretended invention of an art, the ſuppoſed new ſyſtem of a ſcience, the honour of which is diſputed among nations, and fixed at ſome particular period; as if a man, who has found a ſpark under accumulated aſhes, ſhould have a right to pretend that he had created the fire.

"No; the wonderful book of nature has been open to the firſt race of men as it will be to the laſt: but few read in it,

as they ought, to eternize their discoveries. They search into the causes instead of applying the effects to good use; and their vain disputes arm arrogance with incredulity, and cast weakness into the gulf of superstition.

"The name of enchanted, which the vulgar has given to this labyrinth, proves my last assertion. However, it is by the most natural means that I arrived at the knowledge which I am ready to impart to you according to my promise."

In saying this, the Sage conducted his royal guests to a bower of woodbine, surrounded with seats of turf, and thus resumed his discourse:

"On

"On the principle which I have above mentioned, that, to explore cauſes with too much acuteneſs, is the way to blind ourſelves with regard to their effects, you will eaſily believe, that I have not found a moſt ſurpriſing analogy between the flowers and the paſſions of mankind by dint of reſearches and meditation, but by experience.

"As the inſtinct of animals has taught the naturaliſts the virtues of plants, and their power over the human blood, the amuſements of youth have inſtructed me in the analogy that our paſſions, which are formed by the blood, and only ſent to the mind to be purified, have with theſe delicate productions, or rather ſmiles of nature, which, more than any

other vegetables, want the pure æthereal fire to attain the perfection of their exquisite fragrance and their beautiful colours.

"The public prepossession in my favour, which I owe to my eagerness of communicating the fruits that I gather from the fertile tree of study, has enabled me to multiply my observations. Youth of both sexes have been long ago sent to my palace, as tender plants to a skilful gardener, in order to be reared up under the eyes of vigilance.

"Although I committed the minute details of such a precious trust to sure hands, I surveyed the welfare of my pupils with the anxious looks of a father.

Thus

Thus often conducting in perſon the ſmiling band to enamelled lawns or delightful gardens, I obſerved that, according to the difference of their characters and natural bent, they had a peculiar taſte or diſlike for ſuch and ſuch a flower; and though I could not then, and can hardly now, account for the phenomenon, my repeated experiments at laſt produced conviction.

"However, the active power of reflection was not idle: when I ſaw a free-hearted and well-inclined ſtripling, or a lively and artleſs girl, conſtantly courting the roſe, I found ſome ſimilitude between them and a flower ſo perfect in its compoſition and odour. I ſaw the links of ſympathy between ſoft ſenſibility and the

ſweet

sweet fragrance of the violet; between timidity and the humble daisy; between constancy and the unfading amaranthus; between purity and the white lilly. I thought those of an ardent temper justly attracted by the intoxicating tuberose; eager sensuality by the strong, though agreeable, scent of the jonquille; voluptuousness by the delicious perfume of the jessamine; and moderation by the charming mixture of shades and odours of the carnation. In the bright and permanent freshness of the myrtyle's leaves, and in the delicacy of its flowers, I found some reason to account for its being the choice of those who were capable of true love. It was obvious to me why the vain damsel chose the gaudy and scentless tulip; and an empty selfish youth the insipid narcissus.

" In

" In ſhort, every flower agreeable or unpleaſing to the eyes or ſmell, raiſed an idea which confirmed my ſurmiſe of an analogy between them and our paſſions: and at laſt, obſerving that according the full exerciſe of theſe paſſions or only a bent to them, the perſon gathered either flowers in full bloom or tender buds, I conceived the deſign of this labyrinth, enforcing the power of attractive ſympathy, by compoſing each alley with the ſame ſort of flower, and calculating it with an attention, the details of which are too minute and tedious to be mentioned.

" It is ſufficient to have rectified the error of your opinion concerning me: but, if a ſupernatural power be not the portion

of

of man, as his mind participates with the eſſence of a ſpiritual being, it is an occupation worthy of him to collect the beneficial ſtreams which flow from the eternal ſource of goodneſs, in order to pour them on his fellow-creatures.

"I have experienced that the noble labour of promoting the public welfare is always attended with ſelf-ſatisfaction: thus have I taken advantage of the propenſity which men has for the wonderful, on purpoſe to inſure the fruit of ſucceſs to my general benevolence: and though the compoſition of my labyrinth ſhould not be exempt from ſome errors, as I have the conſciouſneſs of a good intention, I truſt to the Power who always rewards it."

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Yy

Youth.

FROM *sul-try noon*, till *night*'s dull shades de-scend,
Be-hold the boy his fruit-less chace at-tend,
To gain the in-sect's *paint-ed wings* he flies,
And pleas'd at last ob-tains the *gaudy prize*:
But whilst its *beau-ties* he surveys with joy,
Those hands which *seize them, fatal-ly de-stroy.*